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THE MONASTICISM OF THE EARLY CHURCH
THROUGH THE RULE OF ST. BENEDICT
COMPARED WITH CONTEMPORARY MONASTIC
INSTITUTIONS IN THE ANGLICAN, ROMAN,
AND EASTERN ORTHODOX COMMUNIONS

By

Walter
W. Harrison Beste

B.A., University of the South, 1939

A THESIS

Submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for

the degree of

BACHELOR OF DIVINITY

in the

DEPARTMENT OF CHURCH HISTORY

Church Divinity School of the Pacific

Berkeley, California

April, 1942



APPROVED:

Advisor

Henry H. Shreve

Dean

Filed: *May 12, 1942*

Date

W. H. Vickham
Librarian.

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PREFACE

PREFACE

The thesis will be divided into two parts. In the first part I propose to trace the development of monasticism from the time of its foundations in Egypt through to and including the type of rule for monastics as set forth by St. Benedict of Nursia who is considered the father of Western Christian Monasticism. In a certain sense it will be a history of monasticism, but especial emphasis will be placed upon Asceticism and its degrees as practiced by the early monks and the later religious communities as well. I shall emphasize the gradual development of monasticism from the solitaries of the deserts to the community types known as "Cenobitic." Emphasis will be placed upon the rules of the different orders and the community life led within their walls. Included will be a discussion of length upon the work, prayer life, dress, and conduct of the monks plus the connections, if any, with the outside world at large. The first part will begin with an introduction in which I shall try to explain the motivating social and religious forces which necessitated this great movement within the Catholic Church. I shall dwell at length upon the Egyptian monks and particularly the life of St. Antony, and his "Eremitical" type of monasticism. Then on to the discussion of monasticism as it advanced under the

Rule of St. Pachomius the founder of Cenobitic Monasticism. One whole chapter will be devoted to the discussion of the Rule of St. Basil who is called the father of Eastern Christian Monasticism, because it was in his day that monasticism first burst into full bloom. All that had come before St. Basil was but preliminary to the great age of his "Holy Rule." It is generally agreed that the height of Eastern Monasticism was achieved in the time of St. Basil. I propose to discuss the period of transition from East to West in one chapter. Citing as examples the institutions of Athanasius in Italy, Martin of Tours in Gaul, and Hilary of Poitiers in Southern Gaul. Mention will be made also of the work of John Cassian in founding monasticism in the West. The first part of the thesis will come to a close with the rather detailed discussion of the Holy Rule of St. Benedict of Nursia. This superb rule was the culmination of all the Eastern rules, and the beginning of the rules which applied to the West. The first part will comprise six chapters.

The second half of the thesis is to be a study of some of the monastic institutions as they exist today in the three branches of the Catholic Church. I hope to show just how monasticism has changed from the early ages and in what way it has remained the same. I hope to give an adequate description of the difference between the

terms "order" and "society" as they exist today particularly in the Roman Catholic Communion.

Present day monasticism in the Roman Catholic Church will be discussed in a separate chapter using the Marist Society (Brothers of Mary) and the Paulist Fathers (Congregation of St. Paul) as examples. In the discussion of these two societies the attempt will be made to point out the purpose of the society and why it was founded, and what particular work, if any, does it accomplish in the Church. I shall also include a brief word about the Father Founders respectively and a few particulars concerning their work.

Anglican Monasticism will be limited to the discussion of three of the five communities for men now in existence in the Episcopal Church in the United States. No attempt will be made to describe the work of the communities in England, nor will there be any mention of communities for women. The three communities chosen are the most prominent ones in the American Church. They are: The Order of the Holy Cross (O.H.C.), The Cowley Fathers (The Mission Priests of the Society of St. John the Evangelist), and the St. Barnabas Brotherhood (S.B.B.) because of its peculiarity of being a community for laymen only.

The closing chapter will be a discussion of monasticism as it exists today in the Eastern portion of Christianity. This type has remained virtually unchanged

through the centuries from the time of its first foundation under St. Basil. The Basilian Rule still remains as the one and only Rule of Eastern Monasticism.

In the preparation of this study I am indebted to Father Maurice O'Moore and Father Patrick Mc. Goldrick, the latter a priest of the Society of Mary, for their invaluable assistance in supplying information for the chapter on Contemporary Roman Catholic Monasticism.

I am also indebted to Father Everett Bosshard and Father George Morrel both of the faculty of the Church Divinity School of the Pacific for their kindness in reading and correcting this manuscript.

A full Bibliography of books used in the compilation of this thesis will be found in the closing pages of the manuscript.

W. H. B.

Church Divinity School of the Pacific,
Berkeley, California,
Nineteen hundred and forty-two.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

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INTRODUCTION

As one walks through San Francisco Chinatown his eyes are attracted to the tower of Old St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church. Just above the clock on this old church structure is written this interesting maxim from the Book of Ecclesiasticus, "Observe the time my son,¹ and fly from evil." We can speak of monasticism in just this way, a flight from evil. Most assuredly it is a giving up of the secular world for the more perfect enjoyment of the contemplation of God. First of all we should make clear, however, the meaning of the word "monk" before we try to explain and give reasons for the rise of the monastic movement. In response to the question what is a monk, Montalembert says:

A monk is a Christian who puts himself apart from the world, in order more surely to work out his eternal salvation. He is a man who withdraws from other men, not in hatred or contempt of them, but for the love of God and his neighbor, and to serve them so much the better, as he shall have more and more purified and regulated his soul.(2)

Indeed the root of the very word "monk" is grounded in the idea of renunciation of the world and all that is worldly, and the seeking of retirement and solitude far from the maddening throngs. The word "monk" is derived from the Greek word "monos" meaning solitary or dwelling alone. So it was at the first. Monks were solitaries,

1. Ecclesiasticus IV:20

2. Montalembert, The Monks of the West (New York: Kenedy and Co., 1912), Vol. 1, p. 166.

and they did dwell alone in the desert wastes talking to no one but themselves, thinking of nothing but the state of their own souls and the sinfulness of their bodies. The one cry of all solitaries was that of mortification of the sinful flesh which cuts us off from God. The body had to be subdued, because it was full of passions and lusts and things which assault and hurt the human soul in its progress towards perfection of the contemplation of God. The cry "fly from evil" sent many into the deserts and swamps of Egypt until these regions were alive with men doing penance for their sins and seeking communion with God. In the Prayer Book Catechism our sponsors in Baptism promise for us that they will renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanity of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh. This, too, is the aim of the monk. In retiring to the desert far from civilization he renounces the world and the flesh and the devil, and strives with all his might and main to put his soul in the presence of God as a pure offering.

We say this was the form of monasticism at first, but it did not remain that way. History repeatedly has shown that man is a social animal, and that he obeys a natural impulse to congregate with others. Consequently, we find the solitaries gathering together in groups and reconstituting the social life from which they appeared

to flee; Eremitical Monasticism grows into Cenobitical Monasticism or a religious society dwelling together in common having a common rule of life. This type of monasticism has formed the basis and strength of the monastic institutions to this day.

It was not enough, however, that the monk merely withdraw from the world. He must needs give up those things which are lawful in the world. He is then, essentially a man who deprives himself of that which he might enjoy without reproach. He accepts not only the precepts of the Gospel, but its advice as well. Montalembert says:

To avoid what is forbidden, he renounces what is permitted. To reach goodness he aspires to perfection. To make sure his salvation, he would do more than is necessary to save him. He binds himself to a kind of chastity, of submission, and of poverty, not required from all Christians. He renounces by a generous effort of his free choice, the ties of marriage and family, individual property, and personal will; and he puts this triple sacrifice under the safeguard of an irrevocable promise or vow. Having thus triumphed over his body by continence, over his soul by obedience, and over the world by voluntary poverty, he comes three times a victor to offer himself to God, and to take his place in the first rank of that army which is called the Church.(1)

We must now seek to answer the question of how the monastic institutions began, and what were the motivating forces which caused men to flee into the deserts.

1. Montalembert, Op. Cit., p. 166.

Monasticism first appeared upon the scene in the middle of the third century at the beginning of the persecution of the Christians by the Emperor Decius (250 A.D.). Perhaps the immediate cause for solitaries in the deserts was this persecution, but we are getting ahead of the issue. It is necessary to study the background in which monasticism originated to understand it completely. This background is to be examined from both the social and religious exigencies of the time.

The great Roman Empire was quivering on its foundations and was soon to collapse asunder. Even in 250 A.D. it was being held together by the loose thread of a decaying and disintegrating culture, hollow and untrue, in which scarcely any man could keep a clear conscience, or a free mind or a clean hand. Once proud Rome, mistress of the world, was swiftly decaying and being undermined by sedition, privy conspiracy, and rebellion of the conquered peoples to say nothing of the rampant bloodshed of the persecution of Christians, and the poverty and pestilence which lurked within. Then, too, there was the threat from the outside. The barbarous hordes from the North were compassing her about on every side, and piece by piece the great Empire fell apart. Suddenly the deserts of Egypt were filled with solitaries who sought there a refuge from Roman corruption, the cruelty of the Caesars, and from the barbarity of the future victorious

nations over Rome. Gradually the Empire learned that besides the Christians who grew in number in the cities everyday, there existed tremendous reserves of men in the solitary places. Along with the Barbarian invasions came the invasions of the monks to replace the martyred and restrain and civilize the conquerers. Clarke says of the times:

Marriage was not attractive. The natural human desire for a wife and family had seldom been so weakened as at this epoch. Racial decay was undoubtedly present, while slavery had produced its inevitable crop of moral and physical deterioration. Nor did poverty possess much terror for the better classes. There were few or no openings for a young man in political life, and the exactions of the Exchequer made existence almost intolerable to many citizens. Rarely have the charms of the simplified life and freedom from the burdens of responsibilities proved so alluring. Again, the last thing the Empire wished to encourage in its sons and daughters was independence and initiative. The spiritual fatigue of the time made it no hardship for the average man to transfer the control of his actions to some masterful abbot such as Pachomius or Schnoudi.(1)

Along with the social influences went the religious also. The monks of the third century had a right to criticize the Church. It had become highly secularized by this time and was beginning to compromise with the World-State. This is not to be taken to mean that the Church renounced her traditional dogmas, on the contrary, she was at her best on these issues, but she had

1. Clarke, St. Basil the Great (Cambridge: University Press, 1913), pp. 13-14.

dangerously lowered her standard of life by an hierarchic system which threatened to stifle the very sense of brotherhood. The Church, too, had delved into the philosophy of Neoplatonism which caused the revolt of many within her fold. There was the tendency also to conform to the wishes of the State, and it was being proved that the Church at length was unable to maintain even her abated claims on the moral life of individuals. The Church was too often constrained to content herself with a mere external obedience to her institutions and forms of worship. Her Saviour's Gospel had become a Gospel dressed in the hells and trappings of the times, and bereft of the vigorous claim to regulate the whole of life from within. The Church had become worldly, subject to worldly intrigues and ambitions, and she was no longer in a position to give peace to those who came seeking shelter from the world. True, she could still promise a peace beyond the grave, but peace in the midst of the storms and trials of life was not now hers to give. What to do ? If one could not find peace in the Church, neither could he find it outside of the Church, and so begins monasticism which will insure to the pious the peace of God. A great spiritual reformation within the Church has now begun. Men and women began to seek God in the solitary wastes of the deserts. They left the

life of the cities and the secular church community to be alone with God and to work out their own eternal salvation. Thousands of individuals before the beginning of the fourth century were to be found living alone in the caves and crevices of the hills of Egypt. Their number gradually increased. They fled not only the world, but the worldliness of the Church. Harnack says:

Honors and riches, wife and children, they renounced in order to shun pleasure and sin, to give themselves up to the enjoyment of the contemplation of God, and to consecrate life by the preparation for death.(1)

In accomplishing all this they were more than justified, for what is the Church after all but an ante-chamber to life at its fullest; the enjoyment of the presence of God for eternity. Was it not the task of the Church to preach the preparation of her children for a holy death? "Let us give up everything and espouse Christ wholly and unreservedly" said the ancient monastics, and this they proceeded to do. This monastic ideal was an undisturbed contemplation of God, and the means of attaining this were the absolute denial of the good things of life among them communion with the secular Church. In every category the world was to be laid aside and henceforth avoided. Do not think for a moment that these early ascetics held the teachings of the Church to be insecure and insufficient

1. Harnack, Monasticism (London: Williams and Morgate, 1901), p.36.

and her divine gifts indifferent. There have never existed more loyal churchmen in the whole history of Christianity than the monks. But as Harnack states:

Her foundation was regarded as insecure, and men doubted not to make up for the loss of her sacramental advantages by asceticism and unceasing contemplation of what is Holy.(1)

The monks were only emphasizing the loftiest aim of the Church-the contemplation of God-but they felt that the Church had not kept wholly to this standard and that she had allowed herself to become excessively worldly. Therefore, unable to find satisfaction in theology, the monks seriously accepted the view that Christianity was a religion, and demanded from the individual a surrender of his whole life, body and soul.

Monasticism did not seek to replace the Church society, nor did it desire to run in competition with the Church. It had no intention of withdrawing from the Church as a whole, and thus we find it seeking the sanction of the Church as a spiritual force subject to her judgment and laws. Thanks be to God that the Church saw the potentialities of monasticism and accepted it rather than declaring it as another heresy. To this day Catholic Christendom will defend the statement that the monastic orders have been, and are, the backbone of the Church.

1. Harnack, Op. Cit., p. 44.

So much for the social and religious background of the monastic movement, what we are interested in establishing next is the immediate cause for it. Tradition asserts that the adoption of the solitary life may have been caused by the widespread persecution of the Christians under the Roman Emperor Decius and his immediate successors Gallus and Valerian. Because Christians repeatedly refused army service and duties of public offices and sacrifices to the emperor, they were looked upon as being enemies of the State. In the reign of Decius a fierce mob attack broke out in Alexandria which resulted in the deaths of several Christians. For several years now suspicion of these people had been on the increase in Rome, and to them was attributed the extremities of the times. Christians refused to worship the State gods, and therefore, the gods were angry and caused hard times. At least this was the feeling of Decius who ruled in 250 A.D. Upon accession to the throne, he issued an edict which initiated the first universal and systematic persecution of the Christians. By far this persecution was the worst of them all. It was the more severe because it had principle and determination behind it, and what is more, it was enforced. The streets of the cities ran red with the blood of martyrs which became the seed of the Church. Dionysius of Alexandria declares that

many Christians fled into the desert to escape their persecutors and remained there when the persecution ceased.¹ It was during this time that life came to be looked upon as something evil unless it was spent for the greater glory of God in prayer and fasting. The note of renunciation and flight from a materialistic world is ever present in all monasticism be it past, present, or to come. The words of the solitaries might well have been:

In the midst of life we are in death; of whom
may we seek for succour, but of thee, O Lord,
who for our sins are justly displeased. (2)

Is there any reason why Egypt, rather than any other portion of the Empire, should have been the cradle of monasticism? There is a definite reason for this. Alexandria being the early capital of Egypt was renowned for its schools of culture. It was of particular importance to the Church because of its excellent Catechetical School which, in the third century, was the fountain head of ecclesiastical theology. The scholarly Origen taught in this school, and indeed might be counted as one of the founders of monasticism since he urged flight from the world, and freeing the soul from the necessity of worldly things. Such an outlook had tremendous effect upon the people and started the trek of the populace into the wilderness. It was this background

1. Walker, A History of the Christian Church
(New York: Scribner and Sons, 1937), p. 86.

2. From the Office of the Dead as found in the
Book of Common Prayer of the Protestant Episcopal Church
in the United States of America.

that gave to Egypt the honour of being the cradle of
monasticism.

CHAPTER II

EREMETICAL MONASTICISM FOUNDED BY ST. ANTONY

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The actual beginnings of monasticism are shrouded in mystery and legend. The fathers of the early church give us a certain amount of information regarding personages scattered here and there in the Egyptian deserts leading a hermit existence. Some of these can be accounted for, while others must be classified as pure myth. The one definite premise with which we have to start is the fact that Egypt was the place and the third century the time of the first monastic institutions. It has been established by these early historians that there were hermits before the year 305 A.D. who had had the intention of leading the life of a hermit. However, Sozomenus,¹ the early historian of Christianity, says that whether the Egyptians or others are to be regarded as the forerunners of this philosophy,² it is universally admitted that Antony the great monk developed this course of life by morals and befitting exercises to the summit of perfection. To this day Antony is called the founder of Eastern Christian Monasticism.

As stated above, there had been hermits before the

1. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church (Second Series) (New York: Christian Literature Co., 1890), Vol. II. Bk. I. p. 248.

2. Constantly used by early historians to signify practice of asceticism.

year 305 A.D. Montalembert says that the monastic life is as old as the world. Its roots lie back in the time of the Hebrew prophets commencing with Samuel and Elijah.¹ The prophets are described as men clad in goatskins and wandering in the deserts and on the mountains, in caves and in shelters of earth.² Their poverty was visible in all their life, and they were given over to endless prayer. Elisha the prophets is cited as being a perfect example of monastic frugality. For furniture he possessed only a pallet, a chair, and a candlestick. None the less, Elijah was given only bread and water by the angel, and he cooked wild herbs for his food.³

St. John the Baptist was regarded by the Greek fathers as the perfect example, and first master, of the monastic life. They bestowed upon him the title Prince of Anchorites and Prince of Monks. He wandered in the wilderness and ate locusts and wild honey the simplest fare obtainable. He wore a cloth of camel's hair and carried a staff.

Still another example of early Hebrew monasticism is to be found in the Essenes and Therapeutists who lived first in the time of the Maccabees upon the coast of the Dead Sea and later in Asia Minor and Egypt. These

1. Montalembert, Op. Cit., p. 166

2. "In sheepskins and goatskins;.....they wandered in deserts and in mountains and in dens of earth." Heb. XI: 37-38.

3. II Kings IV:10.

ascetics are described in length by Sozomenus who in turn¹ quotes Philo. He says:

From the moment they(Essenes)began to apply themselves to the study of philosophy, they gave up their property, relinquished business and society, and dwelt outside of walls in fields and gardens. They also had sacred houses called monasteries in which they lived apart and alone. They occupied their time singing psalms and hymns.

Moreover these Hebrew monks so-called indulged in an austere ascetic life. Sozomenus gives us the view of Philo:

They never tasted food before sunset, and some only took food every three days or even at longer intervals. On certain days they lay on the ground and abstained from wine and flesh of animals. Their food was dry bread, salt, and hyssop, and their drink water. Both men and women practiced celibacy and virginity respectively. (2)

It is difficult not to see in these ascetics the precursors of the monastic movement.

So much for the roots of the movement as they lay in the Jewish Church. Let us now turn to Christian antecedents. The monastic life was instituted by Jesus Christ in the Gospels. It belonged to the Gospel to fertilize and perpetuate the examples of Jewry. Jesus was looked upon as the monk's perfect example. Had He not said that there is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for my sake and the Gospels, but that

1. Schaff and Wace, Op. Cit., Vol. II, p. 248.

2. Loc Cit.

he shall receive an hundred fold now in this time
 houses and brethren, sisters and mothers, children¹
 and lands, and in the world to come eternal life.
 Governed, therefore, by these words in the Gospel, the
 fathers and doctors of the Church declared religious
 vocations to have been enjoined by the Saviour Himself,
 and that it was first practiced in Christendom by His
 Apostles. Eusebius and Jerome both attest to this
 fact. The Book of the Acts of the Apostles tells us
 that there were communities of virgins and widows who
 set themselves apart from the world and lived together
 in private dwellings doing the work of the Lord. The
 first woman consecrated to the religious life was con-
 sidered to have been Anna the prophetess "who was of a
 great age, and had lived with a husband seven years
 from her virginity; she was a widow who departed not
 from the temple, but served God day and night with fast-
 ings and prayers."²

Prior to the Decian persecution there were indivi-
 duals living a life of prayer, fasting and asceticism
 while with their families. These were more often women
 instead of men who thought it more pious to give up the
 intimate family circle and retire into one or two rooms
 of the house and there give of their time and energy to God.

1. St. Mark 10:29-30

2. St. Luke 2:36-37

Persecution began in 250 A.D. , and it was between this date and 270 A.D. that hermits first appeared in the wildernesses of Egypt. St. Antony did not appear upon the scene until the year 270 A.D. He is the first solitary of whom we know anything at great length. He was preceded by several hermits who had fled the tortures of the Empire and who had settled in the dry wastes of the Thebaid and Scetis deserts in Southern Egypt, and in the mountain caverns of Nitria on the border of what is now Libya. This is the region which becomes densely populated with monks, ascetics, and anchorites or whatever name one wishes to apply. They all refer to one who lives a solitary existence. It is only later, in the fourth century, that the word monastery is used to express the type introduced by St. Pachomius.

The most important of the precursors of Antony was one Paul whom church historians call the first hermit. He was a contemporary of Antony, for we are told that both met in the desert and that Antony was the last to see Paul alive. Very little is known about the latter, but his life has been written and preserved for us by St. Jerome¹ who wrote in the year 374 A.D. John Cassian also mentions him in writing about Egyptian monasticism in 489 A.D. Pope Gelasius the first in his learned Roman Council of 494 declares that Jerome's work is authentic history.

1. Schaff and Face, Op. Cit., Vol. VI, p. 299

In contrast to Pope Gelasius' decree, Athanasius writing about the Life of Antony in 356 A.D. does not even mention the name of Paul the first hermit, and he further states that he only wrote what he had heard from Antony's own lips or from his disciples. On the other hand, Jerome said he received his account from two of Antony's disciples Amatheus and Macarius. Athanasius' Life of Antony is considered authentic, while Jerome's Life of Paulus the First Hermit is questionable. Nevertheless, we consult the latter work since it is the only half way genuine thing we possess in relation to the time immediately before Antony.

The desire of the persecution under Decius and Valerian was not so much the slaying of the body as the soul. Consequently, many slow but deadly tortures were inflicted upon the faithful in order to weaken the soul and force it thereby to blaspheme God. Men were smeared with honey and exposed to the sting of bees. Many were enticed into sin by lascivious women, and many were tortured by fire, whip, and sword. Many of the Alexandrian churches were desecrated by the Roman fury. It is from this persecution that St. Paul the hermit fled into the mountain of Nitria and from thence into the desert where he took up his abode within a rocky cavern. Paul was a native of Lower Egypt; he had been born into a wealthy

family. He was forced to flee for his life from a brother-in-law who, having coveted his riches, would have sold him to the persecutors. Paul came to the aforesaid mountain and finding there a secluded cave, he entered and hid until such time would permit him to return to his own in peace and safety. He never left the mountain. St. Jerome says that "he regarded his new home as a gift from God; he fell in love with it, and there in prayer and solitude spent all the rest of his life." He is¹ reputed to have lived to the age of 113.

When we speak of eremetical monachism(monasticism), we mean that type of monachism which is bound up with the life of hermits and solitaries. Eremetical is an extension of the word hermit and comprises all who live alone or outside of a community of people. Under this heading, therefore, should be included the anchorites, solitaries, and ascetics. The first phase of monasticism was the eremetical type. Perhaps the most perfect example of this kind of life is to be found in St. Antony of Egypt. In spite of what has been said in books about other solitaries, St. Antony is always given the place of honor in being called the first monk. He has earned the title of founder of Eastern Christian Monasticism, and is credited with bringing the hermit life to perfection.

1. Schaff and Wace, Op. Cit., Vol. VI, p. 300.

Our chief source for the life of St. Antony is found in the writings of St. Athanasius the often exiled Bishop of Alexandria. He has given the world a complete picture of the great monk-saint in his Life of St. Antony. There can be now not a shadow of a doubt as to the authenticity of this work. The early church historians, Socrates Scholasticus and Sozomenus both speak of it as does John Cassian, Theodoret, and others right down to the present. St. Athanasius himself declares that he wrote the "life" from what the saint himself had conveyed to him in personal interviews. We know from history that St. Athanasius had spent much of his time in the desert among the monks, for it was into these regions that he fled to escape the Arians who would have killed him.

To Antony is credited a life of extreme asceticism in prayer, fasting, and work, plus the founding of the semi-eremetical communities of monks sometimes referred to as "Antonian Monasticism." He was born in the village of Coma near Heraclea in Upper Egypt about the year 250 A.D. You will recall this as being the year of the persecution. He had the good fortune of being born into a devout Christian family, but his parents were martyred in the persecution leaving him with wealth and the care of a younger sister. He was a devout

Christian and went everyday to the church to pray. On entering therein one day he heard the priest read the words of Christ to the rich man, "If thou wouldst be perfect, go and sell that thou hast and give to the poor; and come follow me, and thou shalt have treasure¹ in Heaven." Antony was seized immediately with a pure desire to serve God and fulfill the words and spirit of Christ's Gospel. He, therefore, sold his possessions and gave the money to the poor. Providing for his sister by placing her in a home for virgins, he entered into the church once more where he heard the second of the two passages which effected his vocation as a religious. "Be not anxious for the morrow; for the morrow will take care of itself."² Henceforth, he devoted himself to discipline outside of his house, then outside the city walls, and soon he took up his abode as a hermit in the tombs. He visited several "good"³ men for guidance in his spiritual life, and whenever he heard talk of a pious man in the desert, he journeyed forth to seek him out and learn from him the means of greater discipline. He worked with his hands, remembering the admonition of the Apostle St. Paul "he who is idle let him not eat,"⁴ and part he spent for his own frugal fare, and the rest he gave to the poor and needy.

1. St. Matthew 19:21

2. St. Matthew 6:24

3. Athanasius speaks of these good men as those who were already in the deserts.

4. II Thessalonians 3:10

He had constant recourse to prayer remembering the admonition that a man ought to pray without ceasing.¹ Conducting himself in this way he was beloved by all, and there was not a house in his village into which he was not the most welcomed of guests.

For the first few years of his new vocation Antony listened patiently to the counselling of the good men whom he visited. Athanasius says:

He observed the graciousness of one: the unceasing prayer of another; he took advantage of another's knowledge, and of another's freedom from anger and envy.....One he admired for his endurance, another for his fasting and sleeping on the ground; the meekness of one and the long suffering of another he watched with care, while he took note of the piety towards Christ and the mutual love which animated all. Thus guided and filled, he returned to his own place of discipline, and henceforth, would strive to unite the qualities of each and was eager to show in himself the virtues of all. So all men in his village perceived his sincerity, and when they saw what sort of man he was, they called him God-beloved. (2)

Gradually he began to realize the seriousness of the religious undertaking, and the fact that he had to strive against more than flesh and blood.³ He retired to the tombs across the Nile and from there into the most remote sections of the desert. After twenty years of utter privation, prayer, and solitude, he was a soli-

1. St. Matthew 6:7

2. Schaff and Wace, Op. Cit., Vol. IV, p. 196

3. Athanasius' account gives a long list of temptations suffered by the saint from the devil.

tary no longer. He founded himself surrounded by those who would follow his example, who kept imploring him to come out and instruct them in the ascetic life that they might learn to imitate him in the life of perfection. Reluctantly, he complied with their wishes. He came out from his cave and began to organize Christian monachism somewhere around the year 305 A.D. Later he retired once more into his solitude feeling that the press of so many companions was too great for the health of his own soul. He, too, lived to a great age dying in the year 356 A.D. Before his death he made provisions which would prevent any subsequent veneration of his mortal remains, being buried by two trusted monks who were bound with the promise never to reveal the location of his grave.

The three characteristics of Eastern monachism¹ were solitude, privation, and prayer. By solitude one could concentrate and meditate on the glory of God and the sinfulness of man; by privation the body was disciplined to resist earthly temptations, and in prayer the attacks of the devil were immediately brought to nought. The three are closely linked together. In solitude one finds time to practice privation (self-discipline), and in privation, all other things considered evil, the soul is given over entirely to prayer.

1. Schaff and Wace, Op. Cit., Vol. IV, p. 188.

Antony cultivated to extremes the one property for which eremetical monasticism is famous. Whenever we wish to seek for examples of asceticism through the ages, we return to the lives of the Egyptian, Palestinian, and Syrian monks. In all the long history of monasticism asceticism is never so pronounced as in the first stages of the movement. Just what is asceticism? The concise Oxford Dictionary defines an ascetic as "one who practices severe self-discipline." Clarke says:

If we add a proviso that asceticism is severe self discipline undertaken for religious ends, and that the discipline will be exercised with reference both to the natural desires of the body and the distractions of the outer world, we have a definition that will suit our purpose. No reasonable man will quarrel with this principle of discipline. Self-expression and self-restraint are two equally essential elements of religious life. In order to live in the world at all, it is necessary to use the world; but anyone who attempts to use it to the full must expect spiritual deterioration. But when we proceed to ask how far asceticism is a necessary constituent of religion, or to what extent the severity should be carried, we find ourselves on debatable grounds, where there is no room for legitimate differences of opinion. (1)

More than once the austerity of Antony and his companions graduated into atrocity. Truthfully speaking, monasticism has never been, nor will ever be, without a certain amount of asceticism. Its presence is vital to the religious life of the monk. Clarke continues by saying:

1. Clarke, St. Basil the Great (Cambridge: University Press, 1913), pp. 3-4.

"Asceticism is cultivated not for its own sake, but as a means to an end, namely, the complete freeing of the soul, and the purification of the whole personality."¹

The flesh of the body must be mortified, and the passions which assault and hurt the soul in its upward journey to God were to be quelled by severe asceticism. The question was how to mortify the flesh? The answer, by severe self-discipline. To St. Antony are attributed the means of renunciation: By fasting, poverty, chastity, celibacy, solitude, and extended vigils of prayer. If a monk faithfully incorporated all of these properties into his ascetic practices, he would be sure to discipline his soul to perfection. Antony used prayer as a means to mortify his flesh. Kirk says, "the hermits thought the end of life was the vision of God. The object of asceticism was to prepare for this vision."²

Out of the asceticism of the early hermits comes later on the three-fold monastic vow of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Of ascetic practices Sozomenus says:

They (the hermits) do not demonstrate virtue by argument, but practice it, and count as nothing the glory current among men. They manfully subjugate the passions of the soul, yielding neither to the necessities of nature, nor succumbing to the weakness of the body. Having possessed the power of the Divine Mind, they always look away to the Creator of the whole, night and

1. Clarke, Op. Cit., p. 32

2. Kirk, The Vision of God (New York: Longman's Green and Co., 1934), p. 77 ff.

day worshipping Him, and appeasing Him by prayers and supplications.They are not distressed when insulted, nor do they defend themselves when suffering from malice; nor do they lose heart when pressed by sickness or lack of necessities, but rather do they rejoice in such trials and endure them with patience and meekness.They inure themselves through the whole of life to be content with little, and approximate as nearly to God as is possible to human nature. They regard the present life as a journey only, and so are not occupied with acquiring wealth. They admire the beauty of nature but look to the blessedness of the future. They limit as far as possible the demands of nature, compelling the body to be satisfied with moderate supplies. (1)

If history speaks the truth, one does not wonder that the early centuries of Christianity were filled with saints capable of miraculous healing powers which they employed for the good of mankind.

St. Antony is the perfect example of ascetic austerity. We can compare him to the Gerasene Demoniac who cried after the Lord Jesus to depart from him. The latter inhabited the tombs where he spent his days cutting himself with stones and beating himself with them. The former was all of this and more save for the fact, of course, that he was in his right mind. Antony's asceticism was the accepted form and faith of those who followed him. Antony believed that the practice of goodness would become delightful by habit, so he reflected on more intense methods of asceticism as day by day he

1. Schaff and Wace, Op. Cit., Vol. II., p. 248.

augmented it by self-control. By endless labor he restrained the passions of the soul and the voluptuousness of the body, and conquered over them with the aid of the Divine Wisdom. He ate but once a day after sundown and fasted for three or four days in a row without a crumb of food. His fare was of the poorest to be found. It consisted of bread hard and dry, salt, and water. He slept on a rush mat though more often on the bare ground. He watched throughout the night and continued in prayer until daybreak. He rejected almost immediately the luxurious practice of anointing the body with oil, and the use of the baths and similar luxuries which were likely to relax the tension of the body by moisture. His garments were of hair on the inside and skin without. He neither bathed his body to relieve himself of filth, nor did he ever wash his feet or suffer any part of his body to be put into water unless compelled to by necessity. He never saw himself naked nor did anyone ever see him unclothed. He instructed all who came to him to "live¹ as though dying daily." He says:

For our life is naturally uncertain, and Providence alots it to us daily. But then ordering our daily life, we shall neither fall into sin nor have a lust for anything, nor cherish wrath against any, nor shall we heap up treasure upon earth. We shall forgive all things to all men, nor shall we retain at all the desire for women or of any other foul pleasure. (2)

1. Schaff and Mace, Op. Cit., Vol. IV, p. 198.

2. Ibid., pp. 208-209

The hermit's diet was very meager. Looking at the diet of St. Antony we judge that it was barely enough on which to keep body and soul alive without starvation. Kirk gives a very adequate description of a typical hermit diet. He says:

The hermit avoided all flesh or cooked food. Some lived wholly on grass, raw grain, beans or peas. In many cases they were satisfied with one meal per day. Some fasted the whole week through and only partook of a little food on Saturday and Sunday. Some were content to depend upon the Eucharist alone. (1)

It was demanded of a monk that he refrain from all good things in life. This caused some monks to reason that the Eucharist being a good thing, merit would be achieved by abstaining from it. Church life to the early monks was nothing short of pure luxury. Cassian repeats this well known saying over and over in his writings. "Be-²fore all else the monk ought to avoid women and bishops." Do not think for a moment, however, that the monks were revolting against the organization of the Church, but in their reasoning the Church was a family, and as with the natural family every tie had to be severed, so it was with the Church family. The hermit-ascetic might choose to spend a night or many nights in succession half submerged in a slough, or by other expedients plan to procure sleeplessness over a long period. There were anchorites to whom the very possession of a cell was unworthy

1. Kirk, Op. Cit., p. 83.

2. Ibid., p. 83

for a follower of Christ; some, therefore, took refuge in holes in the ground, or in open cisterns. Others stood day and night under the open sky without lying down being exposed to the rigors of heat and cold alike. All of these things they did in order to mortify the flesh which being sinful, confined the soul. Antony in the course of his own self-discipline attracted many to him. They came begging him to show them the way that they might follow him, and soon the deserts were overrun with hermits renouncing the world and enrolling themselves for the citizenship in the Heavens.

A few examples should be cited for their extremities. Macarius was a monk, a disciple of Antony, who one day struck and killed a gnat. He was so sorry he had taken life that he retired to the insect fested marshes of Scete, and disrobing, remained there in a state of nudity for six months exposed to the stings and bites of the insects. When he came back his fellow monks recognized him only by his voice; his skin was like an elephant's hide.¹

Another type of anchorite noted for his austerity was St. Simeon Stylites. In the fifth century this Syrian monk went through a series of austerities self-imposed. He lived for one whole summer buried up to his neck in earth; then betook himself to a dark cave wearing a spiked girdle. In 423 A.D. he built a pillar and raised himself

1. Adeney, The Greek and Eastern Churches
(New York: Scribner and Sons., 1923), p. 157.

upon it to spend thirty years exposed to the rigors of the elements.¹ This he did to mortify the sinful flesh and bring his body into subjection to save his soul.

Such was the outcome of the asceticism of the early Egyptian monks. Each tried to outdo the other in austerity. In 310 A.D. Hilarion, a monk from Palestine, came to Egypt to learn from Antony. After two months he returned to his own country and began a system of asceticism which is reputed to have been more extreme than that practiced in Egypt.

Antony had not the slightest intention of founding a monastery as we know it to be today. This was to be a gradual development of later years coming to flower under the Rule of St. Basil. Antony was a solitary until his death. He had entered the desert with this idea alone, but in the course of his life he had gathered many men about him. As has been said before these begged the good monk to come out of hiding and show them how to live. This he did, and thus we have the beginning of Antonian monasticism as it is called. The purely eremetical life tends to give away to, and be replaced by, the semi-eremetical. In this type we find the seed of the later monasticism which is called cenobitical. In the semi-eremetical type there

1. Meney, Op. Cit., p. 155

was no organization nor fixed rule. That which constitutes a difference between the two types is the presence of a fixed rule in cenobitical monasticism which everyone obeys. While semi-eremetical monasticism established the two rules of poverty and chastity as binding upon all within the community, obedience was not to be a part of the monastic vow until the time of St. Pachomius. This semi-eremetical type consisted of several anchorites living together in a district in which there was a central church. In this church they were accustomed to gather on Saturday and Sunday only to sing psalms and receive the sacrament. At no other time was it used for purposes of worship. There were elder monks present who were looked upon as spiritual advisors and nothing more than that. They could not command the monks to do this and that, for it was not a part of their power. They were not abbots in the Pachomian sense of the word. When the two days were over, each monk returned to his own cell to renew the practice of his own asceticism. He did the work which suited him best; he even carried on a trade with merchants in the nearby town if there was one. He was his own boss to work out his own salvation as he pleased. Thus the semi-eremetical society appeared to have been a sort of spiritual democracy ruled by the personal influences of the leading ascetics. A young monk might choose to place himself under the tutelage of an older and more experienced monk, but the bonds between

them were wholly voluntary. The young monk was free to leave whenever he wished, and his senior in turn could dismiss him if he wished. It could be said that the semi-eremetical type was a society of anchorites adhering to the precepts of a wiser anchorite. The precepts of Antony to his monks are preserved for posterity by Athanasius. He says:

Keep yourselves from filthy thoughts and fleshly pleasures. Be not deceived by the fulness of the belly. Pray continually, avoid vainglory; sing psalms before sleep and upon waking. Meditate upon the Apostle's words, "let not the sun go down upon your wrath." Observe the traditions of the fathers and chiefly the holy faith in Our Lord Jesus Christ.and live as though dying daily. (1)

The eremetical type had taken the monk away from the world and set him down in the lonely desert, but with the beginning of the semi-eremetical type, we find the monks being gradually incorporated into the life of the world once more. With the Rule of Pachomius the monk has retraced his steps and has brought himself back to the life from which he had fled.

St. Antony has laid the foundations upon which succeeding generations will build until in the time of St. Benedict the picture of the first five hundred years will be completed. Anyone reading this chapter can see

1. Schaff and Wace, Op. Cit., Vol. IV., pp. 210-212.

that the monastic movement was not of small import. Enthusiasm begins to reappear in the Church and over and over again the Church will thank God for the religious orders. The Church will feel in the future the support of these men when she is compassed about on every side by heresy and schism. Then will the monks come to the rescue and convert the heathen for her and lay down their lives that she may live unto the ages of ages.

CHAPTER III

THE CEROBITICAL MONASTICISM OF ST. PACHOMIUS

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THE CENOBITICAL MONASTICISM OF ST. PACHOMIUS

Chapter III begins the discussion of the third type of monasticism, the founder of which was St. Pachomius another of the famous monks of Egypt. Beginning here we shall see a gradual development of the cenobitical type with perfection of its rules by St. Basil in the East and St. Benedict in the West. Cenobitical monasticism will exist alongside of the eremetical and semi-eremetical types until the time of the former saint when the latter of the three types will disappear, and all will be assimilated and absorbed by cenobitism.

The chief sources of information for this chapter have been two primary and several secondary works. Sozomenus in his history of the church includes a detailed chapter about Pachomius, his life and his rule. John Cassian furnishes the second primary source in his Institutes of the Cenobia a collection of writings based upon his observations of the monastic life in Egypt. Secondary sources will be given proper notation at the foot of the page.

St. Pachomius was born about 290 A.D. in the city of Thebes in Upper Egypt of heathen parents. In the year 313 A.D. the Emperor Constantine was at war with Maxentius, and young Pachomius was forcibly enlisted.

He was put on a boat and transported down the Nile to Alexandria. At one of the towns where the ship touched the soldiers were overwhelmed by the kindness of some Christians, and Pachomius at once resolved to be one of them when he had served his time in the army. He began his monastic career following the war as an ascetic living in an abandoned heathen temple. Next he embraced the eremetical life and prevailed upon an elderly hermit named Palemon to allow him to share with him his cell. A few years later he left Palemon and founded a monastery near Denderah in the year 318 A.D. naming it Tabennisi. At the time of his death he ruled nine large monasteries of men and two of women.

Cenobitism means dwelling together under a rule. Now there was a natural tendency for anchorites to draw close together, but their merely coming to live near one another would not produce Cenobitism. They had to have a fixed rule of life which was binding upon all. Pachomius is credited with having supplied that rule. Looking into a Pachomian monastery one found that it was composed of a group of buildings encircled by a wall. The monks lived in houses about thirty or forty to a house which meant about three monks to each cell. At the mother house of Tabennisi were forty houses each presided over by its officials and provosts, while an abbot, heretofore unheard of, presided over each monastery.

The monks were divided up into groups according to the kind of work in which they were employed. Hence we have a house for carpenters, a house for farmers, a house for tanners, etc. Other principles of division were also employed, for we hear of a separate house for Greeks, a house for Copts, and another for Egyptians.¹ There is a remnant of this system today in the monasteries atop Mount Athos in Greece. On Saturdays and Sundays it was the usual custom for the monks to assemble together in the central monastic church for Mass and Holy Communion. This was the only time when the whole monastery met in choir. During the week each house said its daily offices separately.

We must never forget that Pachomius began his religious vocation as a hermit. While he lived with the aged Palemon he led a hermit's existence. He practiced asceticism as severe as Antony, and he fasted and prayed upon the basis of eremetical monasticism. Never let it be said that quarrels existed between the hermits and the cenobites. To say that because of a quarrel with the hermits Pachomius instituted cenobitism is to prevaricate. His one reason for establishing the Cenobium was the thought that eremetical life was a bar to real religious vocation.²

1. Catholic Encyclopedia Vol X., (New York: 1911)
 Art: Huddleston, G. Roger, "Monasticism" pp 465 ff.
 2. Ibid., Vol XI., p. 381

In order to gain this genuine religious vocation he placed everything in reverse. The hermit had shunned work, that is, all but what was necessary to keep him alive from day to day. Pachomius said, in effect, that work, which is the rule of the world, must also become the rule of the monk. It must be schooled to the service of contemplation.¹ Monks could not and should not shut themselves away from the world entirely. A much better system would be to take the rule of the world, purify it, order it, simplify it, and make it over into a rule befitting men who desire to live the religious life. This is exactly what Pachomius did as we shall soon see.

The Rule of Pachomius has come down to us with various recensions and in several versions. It is now impossible to recover the original form of the Rule, but most scholars think that the Rule as contained in the writings of Palladius is of such simplicity that it cannot be far removed from the original. It is a very short rule, and does not attempt to cover the ground. According to tradition it was handed to Pachomius by an angel who received the complaint that it was too diminutive. The angel replied that the Rule was only designed for weaklings and beginners, and that the

¹ I. Kirk, The Vision of God (New York: Longman's Green and Co., 1934), p. 113.

mature monk was to add to the Rule as much in addition as he felt himself capable of living up to. The fundamental idea of Pachomius' Rule, according to Abbot Butler, was to establish a moderate level of observance which would be compulsory for all, and then leave room for expansion which would be up to the judgment of the individual monk. The monks were encouraged to go beyond the requirements in their practice of asceticism, but the simple Rule had to be observed by all, and none were dispensed. Pachomius set up a military routine in his monasteries with different companies of monks working and eating at different hours. The Pachomian monks are reputed to have lived under a rule more severe and extreme than that of the present day Trappist Order. For the first time in its history we find monasticism becoming a system of regulated social discipline, and thus taking the place of unrelaxed, anti-social self-torture.¹ Here is the beginning of the cenobitic system. Every monk must conform to the Rule and seek greater degrees of asceticism while living within the confines of the Rule.

Now we shall begin the discussion of the Rule itself. In the first place, it is chiefly concerned with regulations regarding procedure in prayer, meals, and clothing; it speaks of little else. John Cassian,

1. Kirk, Op. Cit., p. 115

whom we mentioned before as being a very accurate historiographer of Egyptian monasticism, has left us an excellent account of the Cenobia. We shall refer frequently to his work. The Rule is divided into five parts, and for the sake of clarity it is here written in an outline form.¹

- I. Joining the monastery.
 - (a) Renunciation of possessions.
 - (b) Admission to the community.
- II. Life in the monastery.
 - (a) Prayer
 - (b) Meals
 - (c) Clothing
 - (d) Work
- III. Order and discipline.
 - The officers.
- IV. Various other points.
 - (a) Earthly relationships.
 - (b) Journeys.
- V. Relations with the outside world.
 - (a) The official church.
 - (b) Neighboring monasteries.
 - (c) Convents for women.

When the monk entered a monastery he had to re-²nounce all of his worldly possessions. Clarke seems to think that he gave everything he had to the monastery for its use, but John Cassian clearly states that the monastery would not accept anything whatever from the renunciant.³ This procedure was to insure the poorer brethren in the enclosure that they would not have their feelings hurt by someone who could boast of having given

1. This outline is found in Clarke, Op. Cit., pp. 37-38. to which we refer.

2. Loc Cit.

3. Schaff and Wace, Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church (New York: Christian Literature Co., 1890), Vol. XI, p. 219

a large sum of money upon entrance. When the Rule stated that the monk had to sell all of his worldly possessions, it meant that he, like Antony and the hermits before, had to sell everything he possessed and give the money to the poor. Money and goods were not accepted by the monastery for the reason that if the monk did not care for the monastic life and later found himself to be a misfit, he could not petition the abbot to have his money and goods restored. Furthermore, the monk had to lay aside his clothes and be clothed in the monastic habit of the order. Cassian says:

Each one on his admission is stripped of his former possessions, so that he is not allowed any longer to keep even the clothes which he has on his back; but in the council of the brethren he is brought forward into the midst and stripped of his own clothes, and clad by the hand of the abbot in the dress of the monastery, so that by this he may know not only that he has been despoiled of all his old things, but also that he has laid aside all earthly pride, and come down to the want and poverty of Christ.and that he may know that now he is to receive out of the holy and sacred funds of the monastery his rations for his services..... and that he may learn that now he is on the level with the poor with whom Christ was not ashamed to be numbered. (1)

The clothes of the renunciants were preserved by the monastery steward until it could be ascertained whether the new monk would be true to his profession or not. If he so much as disobeyed one particle of the Rule by

refusing to obey the abbot's command, he was stripped of his garb, clothed once more in his own, and sent away from the monastery for good. If it was seen that a monk would prove true to his profession, the worldly clothes were then given to the poor.

The requirements for entering a Pachomian institution were rigid. None were refused unless they had led bad lives hitherto and were such as would require constant watching. To enter a man had to be free of debt, free of marriage, and free from slavery. He had to be in control of his own person completely. It is true that poverty, chastity, and obedience, the three monastic vows existed at this time, but they were not as yet become formal vows to be accepted as part of the religious vocation. This is still a later development altogether. Sozomenus the historian speaking of admission requirements to a Pachomian monastery says: "Those who desired to live with them were first to undergo three years probation during which time the most laborious tasks were thrust upon them, and by this method¹ they could share in their community." Cassian also gives an account of how renunciants are to be tested. He says:

1. Schaff and Face, Op. Cit., Vol. II, p. 292

One who seeks to be admitted to the discipline of the monastery is never received before he gives, by lying outside the doors for ten days or even longer, an evidence of his perseverance and desire, as well as humility and a stout heart filled with patience. And when, prostrate at the feet of all the brethren that pass by, and of set purpose repelled by all and scorned by all,and when, too, covered with many insults and affronts, he has given a practical proof of his steadfastness, and has shown what he will be like in temptations by the way he has borne the disgrace; and when with the ardour of his soul thus ascertained, he is admitted, then they inquire with utmost care whether he is contaminated by a single coin left from his former possessions. (1)

Those who were newcomers to the monastery lived apart from the regular professed brethren for one whole year in what was called the guest house. They followed a simplified rule and proved their willingness to accept the Rule and monastic vocation in all its aspects.²

By this time life within the monastery walls began to show marked improvement. In the first place the eremetical rule of solitude was obliterated. Pachomius is reputed to have said, "set several cells together, and let monks dwell three to a cell." sleeping was to be done with the body clothed in linen singlets and girdles. The only ascetic note was that none could lie down, for sleeping had to be done in a rather awkward position of half sitting, half reclining on wooden chairs.³

1. Schaff and Mace, Op. Cit., Vol. XI, p. 219
 2. Forerunner of the modern Novitiate.
 3. Kirk, Op. Cit., p. 114

Of all activity prayer remained the most important. The hermits had been used to spending the whole day in prayer. They prayed while they ate; they prayed while they worked, and even their sleep was periodically interrupted by prayers. Under Pachomius this rather rigorous system was somewhat modified. He still insisted on a great amount of prayer, but he appointed certain hours of the day and night in which it was to be accomplished. It is not clear, however, just exactly what these hours were. Punctuality was strictly enforced, and those who came late to the chapel for offices were reprimanded. It is known that the whole body of monks assembled in the church only for the recitation of the greater offices, probably four times a day, and for receiving the Holy Communion.¹ Sozomenus the historian tells us about the life of prayer as it was led at Tabennisi the chief Pachomian monastery.

On the first and last days of the week they (the monks) were to approach the altar for the Communion in the Holy Mysteries, and were then to unloose their girdles and throw off their robes of skin. They were to pray twelve times during the night (nocturnal prayers). At the ninth hour they were to pray thrice, and when about to partake of food they were to sing a psalm before each prayer. (2)

The monastic hours as we know them today were not as yet heard of. They began in the time of the Rule of St. Basil and were given additions and perfection by St. Benedict in 530 A.D.³ The prayer hours were composed of psalms,

1. Clarke, Op. Cit., p. 37

2. Schaff and Wace, Op. Cit., Vol. II, p. 292

3. The seven hours of prayer were Lauds, Prime, Terece.

hymns, and prayers with short portions of Holy Scripture being read aloud. Pachomius encouraged prayer while the monk was occupied in his daily work so that the mind would be occupied as well as the hand. As early as Pachomius we find the practice of keeping vigils throughout the nights before the Sabbath and on days and nights before major festivals particularly Easter and Pentecost. The monks would spend the whole night in prayer and singing psalms. On the Sabbath day and on all major festivals a general dispensation from fasting was given to all.

The Rule made the reading of divers portions of the Holy Scriptures a strict obligation, therefore, all the monks were required to be able to read and write. The first duty imposed upon novices was that they learn to¹ read if they did not already know.

There were to be but two meals per day, and flesh and wine were forbidden at all times, but otherwise no special abstinence was enjoined. In order that the continuous work policy be not interrupted the mid-day meal was taken in sections. Twice a week on Wednesdays and Fridays the general community fasts were observed. Sunday, by special dispensation, was always regarded as a feast day and never a fast day. Monks were prohibited from taking anything between meals in order to discipline themselves against the sin of gluttony.

Montalembert, The Monks of the West (New York: Kenedy and Co., 1912), Vol. I., p. 185

The effect of the new Pachomian Rule regarding food must have been revolutionary. It will be recalled that the hermit-ideal was the reducing of all eating and drinking to the bare minimum. Pachomius now says that each monk shall eat and drink as he needs, and none shall be hindered from fasting or eating. The temporal enjoyment of food was now also wholly legitimate. If a monk wanted to fast he did so and signified his good intentions by not appearing at the common table. In cases such as this bread, water, and salt was placed in his cell. The rule of silence at meals was strictly enforced, and all meals, except for the above¹ mentioned provision, were to be eaten in the common hall. Not all were advised to fast, for there were some, as Pachomius pointed out, who had not sufficient strength to do so. A very interesting note was that the abbot was to keep close watch at table to see who ate the most and who ate the least, then work in proportion to the individual consumption was assigned. This proved to be a very good rule, since an excess amount of food tended to sloth and weakening of the mind. It was also recognized that food and wine robbed the mind of clear contemplation. Gluttonous desires were to be obliterated by controlled fasting.

1. Kirk, Op. Cit., p. 115

Cassian says:

We must trample underfoot gluttonous desires and to this end the mind must be reduced not only by fasting, but also by vigils, reading, and frequent compunction of heart for those things in which perhaps it recollects that it has been deceived or overcome. (1)

Finally, in regard to food, the sick were to be cared for almost lavishly, and their fancies in diet were to be considered. The story is told how on one occasion when Pachomius himself was sick, one of the monks murmured about another sick inmate asking for meat. He said to the man cheerfully, "to the pure all things are pure," and then ordered a fatling to be killed and dressed for himself and his sick companion.²

According to the Pachomian Rule a monk upon his arrival was clothed in the habit of the monastery. At this early date in monastic history there appears to have been a definite habit, and Pachomius is believed to have invented it. The monk was to wear his habit until he died and then was to be buried in it. Sozomenus describes the dress of the Pachomian monk. He says:

They wore their tunics without sleeves, in order to teach that the hands ought not to be ready to do presumptuous evil. They wore a covering on their heads called a cowl (Cucullium) to show that they ought to live with the same innocence and purity as infants who are nourished with milk, and wear a covering of the same form. Their

1. Schaff and Wace, Op. Cit., Vol. XI., p. 238
 2. Kirk, Op. Cit., p. 114

girdle, and a species of scarf which they wear across the loins, shoulders, and arms, (Melotes) admonish them that they ought to be always ready in the service and work of God. (1)

Sozomenus also tells us about a garment of skin which was worn by some, but he gives no reason why it was not worn by all. Cassian also speaks of these same garments and adds to them a staff and sandals which were worn only in the inclement weather.

2

"If a man will not work, neither let him eat."

This was the rule of Antony and likewise that of Pachomius. Everyday the abbot was to assign each man his work, and everyone had to do the work assigned unless sickness prevented him. The work was not to be mere manual labor but craftsmanship of a high order. Thus in the monasteries were found tailors, fullers, cooks, basket-weavers, and farmers. All work was done under the direction of a foreman, and another officer called the steward was responsible for the marketing of the goods. A monk could not claim for his own anything which he had made, and all proceeds went for the upkeep and good of the whole community.

Kirk says that discipline was the reply to rigorism. The monasteries were presided over by a superior

1. Schaff and Mace, Op. Cit., Vol. II., p. 292.
 2. II Thessalonians 3:10

or abbot, as he was generally called, in whom was vested great authority. Tabennisi, because of its primary importance, was considered the mother house, and the abbot general (of the whole order) had the authority to appoint the heads of the daughter houses. Furthermore Pachomius reserved the right to designate his successor. Twice every year, at Easter and in August, a general chapter meeting of the whole community was held. In the sight of the superior all were equal; there were no favorites, and all had to render unquestioning obedience to him or to his deputy. The superior, if he thought it expedient, could transfer monks from one monastery to another.

Section four of the Rule consists of various points. For three years after the monk entered the monastery, or that time in which he was occupied in his novitiate, he was not allowed to see any of his relations or friends. After that probationary period he was permitted to see relations but not without the consent of the superior and in the presence of other brethren. This rule forms a part of the Roman Catholic Orders today which are designated "cloistered." The nun receiving a visit from relatives or friends must be content to have

the superior or mother prioress listen to the conversation. At first journeys were forbidden, but the Rule was afterwards relaxed. As the community developed it became necessary in order to dispose of produce made by the craftsmen in the monasteries.

What were the monks relations with the outside world at large ? Pachomius was at first condemned by the secular church because the bishops viewed him with suspicion. However, he won the Church over by paying great deference to the bishops in all doctrinal and practical matters. The visit of Athanasius in 330 A.D. set the seal of approval on his work. ¹ Athanasius himself would have probably been a monk had he been able to arrange it. Montalembert says that Athanasius, when in retreat from Alexandria, would seek the solitariness of the desert and the safety of the Pachomian monasteries. He says:

He (Athanasius) always counted upon the sympathy of the monks, and always seconded with all his might the progress of their order. He could then regard himself as at home among those houses avowed to prayer and silence, rising from stage to stage along the Nile. He took refuge for six years in the desert passing from one monastery to another. The monks would rather be killed themselves than to reveal the hiding place of the beloved bishop. (2)

The "Antonian" monks did not quarrel with the Pachomian monks, but they stood aghast at the innovations of

1. Clarke, St. Basil the Great (Cambridge: The University Press, 1913), p. 39

2. Montalembert, Op. Cit., Vol. I., pp. 186-189

Pachomius. However, the latter never insisted that a monk renounce any of his ascetic practices. The hermits were used to coming to the cenobia to train themselves to lead, in more rigid fashion, the eremetical system. It was customary for them to return to the desert solitude after some years in the monastery.

Two monasteries for women have been attributed to Pachomius. At the same time of the founding of Tabennisi, his sister Mary went to the opposite side of the Nile and began a convent for women. Clarke says that this soon became a proper nunnery. It was completely under the control of the monks, who delegated elderly men to care¹ for it's discipline. The nuns did not do heavy work, but sewed the habits for the men and did the mending.

At the death of Pachomius cenobitical monasticism had achieved quite a start in Egypt. When St. Basil writes his Rule, we shall see all monasticism absorbed by the cenobia. As we close this chapter we must realize the tremendous changes which have taken place in the organization of monasticism since the very first beginning. Pachomius brings the monk back to realities, makes a Rule for him, and retraces his steps along the road back to the world of service for his fellow men. Yet provides for a definite program for the life of prayer, fasting, and penance.

1. Clarke, Op. Cit., p. 39

CHAPTER IV

THE RULE OF ST. BASIL

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"Go to the Thebaid; you shall find there a solitude still more beautiful than Paradise, a thousand choirs of angels under the human form, nations of martyrs, armies of virgins, the diabolical tyrant chained, and Christ¹ triumphant and glorified." Such was the counsel of Athanasius after having spent six years in the monasteries of the desert. His advice was taken by a young Cappadocian reader newly baptized into the faith and desirous of learning more concerning the monastic order. That man was Basil who was destined to be one of the most famed of men throughout the Christian Church of years to come. He was destined from the first to bring monasticism from the obscurity of the Egyptian deserts into the light of the great Empire and make of it a motivating force for the glory of God and the exaltation of the Catholic Church.

Basil was born in the Roman province of Cappadocia of a rich and noble family. His father, himself an educated scholar, saw to it that his sons had a well rounded education. Basil, therefore, went to school in Caesarea, Constantinople, and then to the University

1. Montalembert, Op. Cit., Vol. I., p. 168

of Athens. It was in this last place that he met his friend-to-be, Gregory of Nazianzus. All during school days Basil read the Scripture and was noted for his stainless character and devout life. When his university course was finished, his classmates tried to prevail upon him to remain for another year. He, however, thought himself sufficiently schooled, and then, he had a yearning for travel. He even rejected a handsome offer from Neocaesarea, a prosperous town in Cappadocia, to come and teach rhetoric in the school there. Basil had come from Christian parents for in 357, after his university career, he sought baptism and was baptized by Bishop Dianius of Caesarea. He consecrated himself to an ascetic and philosophic life. In 358 he set out for Egypt, having heard of the monks and their mode of life he was anxious to observe and study their methods. He returned from Egypt fully convinced that he must accept the habit and become a monk. He renounced his portion of the family fortune and established a monastery in the forests of Pontus. He would have had Gregory Nazianzus with him had not the latter complained of the forests as being "too dark." Here in his Pontic retreat Basil began his system of stringent ascetic discipline which eventually contributed to the break down of his health and the shortening of his life.

He died at the age of fifty. He imitated the monks of the desert in eating once a day no more than was absolutely necessary, and his fare was the poorest. Even when, in years to come, he became Archbishop of Caesarea he would not allow any flesh meat to be served in the house. He wore one under and one over garment, and at night slept in a hair shirt. This he did not wear in the day time for the fear of seeming ostentatious. He was a consistent celibate and always conscious of his chastity. He is credited with establishing monasticism in Pontus and Cappadocia although there were hermits in those regions before him. Basil's form was that of the cenobia, for he believed a hermit wasted his life in selfish isolation¹ and unprofitable idleness. Soon after establishing himself in Pontus he was ordained to the diaconate. Soon the district was filled with groups of hard working ascetics of both sexes all working, preaching the Nicene doctrines, and refuting the Arian heresy. Basil's family, after the death of the father, also retired to a country house in Pontus and set up a semi-monastic existence. From its beginning, Basil's monastery was run on a definite system. He sketched rules for the cenobia and began to keep the prayer hours, labor, and study. The monastery had a rapid growth, and in 359 Basil found he could leave things in charge of an assistant and go to the Constantinople. In

1. Schaff and Wace, A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church (second series) (New York: Christian Literature Co., 1890), Vol. VIII., p. XVII.

368 A.D. Basil set an example for the wealthy in Christian charity. A great famine swept over Cappadocia, and he did all he could to relieve starvation by selling his own possessions and giving the money to the poor. Eusebius the Bishop of Cappadocia died in 370 A.D. and Basil had himself elected to the vacant See. Here he ruled his spiritual children until his untimely death in 379.

With the advent of Basil the scene shifts from Egypt to Asia Minor, and the spread of monasticism is henceforth from these two areas combined. Basil was above everything else an organizer. His chief aim was to organize the monastic life into a better system than that which had been instituted by Pachomius. At the time of his death the working alliance between the official church and the monastic institutions was prevalent and noticeable. Basil was at once a monk, a bishop, and a philanthropist. He founded many charitable institutions among them hospitals, orphanages, and asylums.

Antony had been honored with the title "founder of Eastern monasticism," Pachomius had been exalted as "founder of Cenobitical monasticism," but to Basil is given the honor of being called "father of Eastern monasticism." Henceforth, his Rule unites all the branches of monasticism in the East.

From now on all monasticism is based upon a rule, and nothing is entirely eremitic. Some have called Basil the "Benedict of the Oriental Church,"¹ for his influence has been widespread through the intermediary of the Benedictine Rule of 530 A.D.

Basil had very definite ideas in regard to the practice of asceticism in his monasteries as well as ideas about the degree of austerity and enthusiasm. First of all, asceticism was not a new thing in Pontus, for it had been firmly rooted there by solitaries who had made their way into the country from Egypt and Palestine prior to the baptism of Basil. Basil himself fostered the ascetic life; indeed he urged the general adoption of it. He was not as rigid, however, as some of his predecessors had been regarding the degrees of the practice. Jerome had a very high regard for virginity and a very low regard for marriage. Basil is not as strict and fanatic about it. He recognized its compatibility with goodness in the case of those who were "in the world." He was definitely influenced by Egyptian monasticism, for we find references to it included in his rules. He accepted outright the Pachomian system as over against the "Antoninian" type, but he reserved for himself important alterations. One gathers from his writings and letters

1. Adeney, The Greek and Eastern Churches (New York: Scribner and Sons., 1923), p. 158

that he was rather disgusted with the immensity of the Pachomian monasteries, and consequently, we find him regulating the size of his own institutions. Under the "Basilian" system we find monasteries of moderate size with tremendous powers vested in the abbot. However, we now find that the abbot was responsible for each individual monk under his jurisdiction. He was a servant of servants so to speak. A majority of sources seem to think that the average size of a "Basilian" monastery was from thirty to forty monks. The Pachomian institutions required a number of officers, and it was to be the case in "Basilian" monasticism. The Rules of both orders disclose a busy, self-centered community large enough to supply its own wants.¹ Monasticism for women was expressly provided for. Basil inaugurated a system of double monasteries in which the abbot and abbess were in especial close connection. The abbot ruled over the whole community of men and women, but his authority over the women was exercised through the abbess.

There appeared at the outset a sort of loose confederation among the monasteries. Periodical meetings of the superiors were held and always a new superior was to be chosen by all the others meeting together while the

1. Clarke, St. Basil the Great (Cambridge: The University Press, 1913), p. 117

local monks had the right to protest or accept the choice. There was no superior general of the whole Basilian Rule until the death of Basil when one was chosen, for while the founder lived, he assumed personal superiority over all his monasteries. As we go along to discuss the Rule we shall see that the general framework is Pachomian but modified in the direction of less rigidity and leaving more scope for voluntary action of the individuals.¹

The whole theme of the Basilian Rules is moderation in all things. The gist of his argument was that a monk must work as a part of his daily life, and he could not do his best work if he had spent most of the night in the practice of austerity which greatly reduced bodily strength. Basil knew this only too well, and he probably had his own condition in mind when he wrote this. He, therefore, fixed what he thought was a reasonable standard of self-discipline and sternly forbade his monks to exceed this limit. No private fasts were permitted without the permission of the abbot, and no one could vie with his brother in disciplinary measures. The foundation of the Rule is Pachomian; the body is Basilian, and the bricks are mortared together with common sense.

1. Clarke, Op. Cit., p. 113

"Antonian and Pachomian monasticism contained the miraculous to a great extent. Not so with Basilian monasticism in which is found a complete absence of miraculous tales, of demonic powers, and of spiritual conflicts and healings. The gifts of the Spirit for Basil mean moral and spiritual gifts rather than the power to see and do supernatural things.¹

Basil completely reorganizes the common life. Pachomian monasticism was cenobitic only in outward appearance, while their inner state was very individualistic. Basil makes cenobitism a reality. He forbids anything which even so much as hints at a solitary existence. "Man was made for the common life and not for the monastic life," he said.² Basil's motto could very well have been "Ecce Quam Bonum."³ Finally, monasticism comes back into the service of the Church. The monks were like an army sent out to fight the forces of heresy which convulsed the Holy Catholic Church. They now become the bulwark of the Church and espouse her battles. What does Basil do? He enlists the services of monasticism to strengthen the Church. He reveals his belief that the bishop of the district must be consulted as to affairs in the cloisters.

1. Clarke, Op. Cit., p. 120

2. Loc Cit.

3. Psalm 133.

The monk must now remain in the world and teach the people the way, the truth, and the light that is Christ. He must not shun nor shut himself away from society as was the custom of Pachomius. He must practice and preach the Christian life. Where may we look for the founding of hospitals for the sick, homes for the aged, orphanages for the fatherless, and institutions for the insane? Where but in the Basilian monasteries where monks were taught that their mission in life was to minister to "the least of these." The stage is set for a great religious revival. The foundations have been laid, and God raises up a leader and organizer in the person of the saintly Basil.

St. Basil, for he was later canonized by the Catholic Church, was the author of two sets of Rules: The Regulae Fusius Tractatae or the longer rules which consist of approximately fifty-five sections, and the Regulae Brevius Tractatae or the shorter rules which have thirty-three sections. The longer rules are expressly referred to in the shorter ones. We cannot look upon these longer rules as being rules in the strict sense. They form, more or less, a series of exhortations and homilies concerning the religious state. The shorter rules are rules in the strict sense of the word. They deal with the conduct of the monk in the daily routine of prayer, work, and food.

The longer rules were probably written while Basil was in his Pontic retreat. The shorter rules were written some time later, probably in the year of his retirement and after his ordination to the ¹priesthood. Basil believed in the ultimate authority of Holy Scripture, for every rule within his Rule is accompanied by a proof text.

Unlike Pachomius, Basil was able to draw from several sources in the compilation of his Rule. ²Clarke says there were three, but there may have been more which are as yet unknown.

- I. The unorganized ascetic life which was found in Cappadocia and Pontus during Basil's childhood and youth.
- II. The Rule of life practiced in the Pachomian monasteries at the time of Basil's visit to Egypt.
- III. The innovations which commended themselves to his mature judgment as desirable in view of the needs of the Church and the character of his fellow countrymen.

The only foreign source was the Rule of Pachomius, for Basil did not use anything he heard or saw in Egypt save from Tabennisi and its daughter monasteries. The resemblance between the Pachomian and Basilian Rules is very close in places and often descends to identical details. In the discussion of the actual Rules, both will be discussed at once. ³We shall follow the same outline

1. Morison, St. Basil and His Rule (Oxford; The University Press, 1912), p. 18
 2. Clarke, Op. Cit., p. 122
 3. Clarke combines the two together for discussion.

as that used for Pachomius' Rule for the purpose of clarity. The Basilian Rules are divided into six parts:

- I. Joining the monastery.
 - (A) Withdrawal from the world.
 - (B) Renunciation of possessions.
 - (C) Admission to the community.
- II. Life in the monastery.
 - (A) The principle of the common life.
 - (B) Prayer
 - (C) Meals
 - (D) Clothing
 - (E) Work
- III. Order and discipline.
 - (A) The officers.
 - (B) The senior brethren.
 - (C) Leaving the monastery.
 - (D) Confession.
- IV. Various other points.
 - (A) Earthly relationships.
 - (B) Journeys.
 - (C) Charitable works.
 - (D) Educational work.
- V. Relations with outside world.
 - (A) The official church
 - (B) Neighboring monasteries
 - (C) Convents for women.
- VI. The Biblical foundation.

"It is necessary to withdraw from the world to live the monastic life; one cannot associate with sinners without being contaminated," said Basil. He believed their company made one familiar with a low standard of life which was complacent with the modern attainment of virtue. The call of God to the religious state must be answered immediately. If he calls, everything including the love of parents must be renounced. Basil devotes several chapters in his Rule to renunciation of worldly possessions, which leads us to believe that several of

his followers were wealthy men. In the renunciation of property the Basilian Rule follows the Pachomian Rule quite closely. The postulant must part with everything he owns, for no private property within the monastery is to be allowed. Furthermore, he cannot give it to the monastery for the use of the good of the whole, but must dispose of it through the hands of trustworthy friends or through the poor. This rule was interpreted with great freedom, for we are told that Basil kept a large amount of his own personal property while he was alive for the upkeep of the monastery. Statistics lead us to believe also that monks had "Spending money" so to speak, for it was their custom to receive small allowances from relatives. Those so fortunate could not flaunt their wealth before the poorer brethren without punishment. All affairs of estate or property had to be done outside the monastery and through the relatives of the monk. He himself could not quarrel with the Exchequer about property rights, legal matters, taxes, etc. It seems that renunciation of private property meant simply that the monk could not have private control over his property, but must leave it with someone he could trust. This is a new innovation; Pachomius would not have considered such a thing.

Applicants to the community were to be accepted, but not until after a careful and thorough examination and investigation of the applicant had been accomplished by a committee of monks selected for that purpose. It had to be ascertained first that the postulant was free from slavery, marriage, and that he was not a notorious evil liver. Pachomius provided for this in his Rule also. "You are hereby sentenced to three years of hard labor", says the hardboiled judge in the courthouse. He would be merely re-echoing the command of Pachomius which made a three year novitiate of hard work binding upon all applicants. This rigid rule was modified under Basil to some extent. We can say that the novitiate was a thorough one, but the time element is not mentioned anywhere in the two sets of Rules. Not very much is said concerning the discipline of novices except that they were to keep silent at certain hours in order "that they might, by uttering nothing except in the Church services, learn the manners of speech proper to the religious life and forget bad habits." Like Pachomius, Basil insists that the novices have an adequate knowledge of Holy Scripture. Several hours of the day were given to Bible study alone. If every precept of the Rule was founded on Scripture, the monk had to know the meaning of the foundation passages.

Reception into the monastery is modified to a great extent.
 It is hinted by Clarke ¹ that Basil permitted periods of probation wherein, prior to actual profession, a man could first try himself in the monastic life to see whether or not he was fitted for it. At the admission of a new member, the whole community was to be present. Basil emphasizes precaution and gives several rules for the admission. He says: ²

Extra precautions should be taken if a man applies to be admitted for a limited time only. He may be sincere, or he may be a spy. One may be admitted at any age provided there are witnesses to his character. The profession of virginity is to be left until years of digression in order to give the postulant time for finding out whether he is really called of God. When the time of profession comes the church authorities are to be present.

Pachomian monasticism was not pure cenobitism. There were many individualists within its walls, and one only had to fulfill certain parts of the Rule and suit himself on the other parts. This is completely changed in Basil. He makes Pachomian cenobitism over into a living organism complete in all its forms. He believed that, man, being a social animal and dependent upon his fellows, could lead a much better life of prayer in a community.

1. Clarke, Op. Cit., p. 84

2. Loc Cit.

Christ had taught that men should love their neighbors.

The cenobite is better than the anchorite for the following reasons according to Basil:

We are none of us self-sufficient in the matter of providing for our bodily needs. Solitude is antagonistic to the law of love, since the solitude is only conducive to self-interest. The solitary is bound only to serve his own interests. It is harmful to the soul, when we have no one to rebuke us for our faults. Certain specific Christian duties, such as feeding the hungry, and clothing the naked, are impossible for the true solitary. We are all members one of another, and Christ is our Head. If we separate from our brethren, how can we keep our relation to Christ intact? We all have different gifts. The solitary buries his gift, but in the cenobium each shares in the gifts of his brethren. Most important of all is that the solitary is in danger of self-pleasing, and thinking he has already attained perfection. In the nature of things he cannot practice humility, pity, or long-suffering.(1)

The cenobitic is then the perfect form and the final form. Basil refuses to admit of any place for the return of the eremetical life, and gives the idea that a hermit's life is a selfish one lived for individual gratification and gain.

Continuity of prayer was the most important aspect of monastic life. The monk literally lived a prayer by prayer existence. Pachomius insisted upon at least three hours of common prayer daily, and the rest spent in private meditation.

1. Clarke, Op. Cit., p. 86

The Basilian communities were the first to set up systematic prayer hours which were called the Canonical Hours. These were brought to perfection under the Rule of St. Benedict. Basil ordered his monks into the monastery churches at certain fixed hours of the day for public recitation of prayers. The Psalmist says, "Seven times a day do I praise thee because of thy righteous judgments."¹ Basil ignores the number and divides the hours into eight instead. We know very little about the structure of these prayer hours, but we do know that they were varied in order to prevent inattention. We also know that much was sung or chanted. The hours contained psalms, hymns, prayers, and readings from Holy Scripture. Each service had its own ritual observances. In the Regulae Fusius Tractatae or the longer rules, we have a very careful outline of the eight prayer hours which were absolutely required. First of all there was the morning hour of prayer which should bring to the mind of each monk the special remembrance of God's grace in keeping him safe through the night. Secondly, there was the prayer office of the third hour for remembering the gift of the Holy Spirit which was given to the apostles at the third hour. Thirdly, the sixth hour of prayer of

1. Psalm 119

which Basil says:

.....following the example of the saints as it is written, "in the evening, and morning, and at noonday will I tell and proclaim; and he shall hear my voice." and that we may be delivered from calamity and from the demon of the noonday, let the ninetieth psalm be recited at this hour. (1)

The fourth period of prayer was to be observed at the ninth hour recalling the time when the apostles went into the temple to pray.² At the end of day formal prayer was to be offered also, and when night began there was to be another office of prayer, and then at midnight another office because of what was contained in Psalm 119.

"At midnight will I rise to give thanks unto thee,³ because of thy righteous judgments." Basil insisted also that it was only right to get up before the dawn and recite another office in order to prevent the dawn from "finding us asleep in our beds." Eight separate offices were a part of the monks daily routine which he had to recite. All, with the exception of those who were sick, had to assemble in the chapel at the stroke of the bell. These offices correspond to the later Canonical Hours which were introduced by Benedict. The Basilian hours were: Prime, Terce, Sext, None, Vespers, Compline, Nocturnes, and Lauds. Benedict excluded Nocturnes and modeled his prayer hours around the remaining seven.

1. Morison, *Op. Cit.*, p. 64

2. Acts 3:1 "Peter and John went up to the temple at the hour of prayer it being the ninth hour."

3. Psalm 119

Vespers in the Basilian monastery was a time for thanksgiving to God for the blessings of the day, and also a time for the confession of sins.¹ The lamps of the church were lit at this service, and a hymn appropriate to this ceremony was sung.²

For a time it was thought that Benedict had been the first to introduce the office of Compline into his breviary, but we have the formation of a Compline office in Basil's time. Perhaps Benedict was the first to give the Compline office a formal liturgical character, but Basil seems to have had some form in his at that time.

The Pachomian monks were required to spend some nights of the year in complete vigil in the church. Basil did not encourage this practice but instituted instead the three night hours of Vespers, Nocturnes, and Lauds which were recited respectively at evening, midnight, and before daybreak. The work for the day was inaugurated by the recitation of Prime.

Basil did not confine prayer to petition. He insisted that the scriptures be read as part of the daily meditation. Meditation, thanksgiving, and confession of sins were all emphasized as necessary for a well rounded life of prayer. Confession was provided

1. The Benedictine writer called these the Preces.

2. Vestiges of this hymn are found in #12 of the Pension Fund Hymnal.

but could not be made to anyone but the special priests appointed to the task of hearing them. Rather surprising is the lack of reference to the Eucharist in the Basilian monasteries. Evidently there was a shortage of priests. Basil speaks as though he sanctioned frequent reception of the Sacrament other than just on Saturday and Sunday. He requests that all receive on saint's days and the rule that there be no private¹ celebrations. In his letters he shows how deep a reverence he has for the Sacrament. In number 93 he writes:

It is good and beneficial to communicate everyday, and to partake of the holy Body and Blood of Christ. For He distinctly says, "He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood hath eternal life." (2) And who doubts that to share frequently in life, is the same thing as to have manifold life. I, indeed, communicate four times a week, on the Lord's Day, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday, and on other days if there is a commemoration of any saint. (3)

In response to the question "ought we to pray without ceasing," Basil responds with what is considered one of

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1. Contained in the Regulae Breuius Tractatae
 2. Quotation found in St. John 6:34
 3. Schaff and Wace, Op. Cit., Vol. VIII., p. 179

the most beautiful passages in all his writings. He says:

Prayer is a petition for good addressed by the pious to God. But we do not rigidly confine our petition to words. Nor yet do we imagine that God requires to be reminded by speech. He knows our needs even though we do not ask Him. I say that we must not think that our prayer consists only in syllables. The strength of prayer lies rather in the purpose of the soul, and in deeds of virtue effecting every part and moment of life. "Whether ye eat or drink, or what so ever ye do; do all to the glory of God." (1) As thou takest thy seat at table, pray. As thou liftest the loaf, offer thanks to the giver. When thou sustainest thy bodily weakness with wine, remember Him who supplies thee with this gift, to make thy heart glad and comfort thine infirmity. As thou art putting on thy tunic, thank Him who gave it thee. Is the day over? Thank Him who has given us the sun for the service of our daily work, and has provided us with fire to brighten the night and to serve for other needs of life. When thou lookest upward to Heaven and seest the beauty of the stars, pray to the Lord of all things visible.and let thy very slumbers be exercises of piety. Thus mayest thou pray without ceasing, not in words, but by the whole conduct of thy life, so uniting thyself to God that thy life is one unceasing prayer. (2)

Severe asceticism through fasting could not find a place in Basil's Rules, since it was his aim to avoid extremities. Pachomius allowed two meals a day, and so it is with Basil. There was a mid-day meal plus a light evening meal, but there was to be a fixed time for these meals. Pachomius would not allow his monks to stop work altogether, so they ate in shifts. Basil obliterated and improved this system by having

1. I. Corinthians 10:31

2. Morison, Op. Cit., pp. 59-60

everyone leave his work at the first stroke of the bell announcing refectio. The dining room was always very orderly with one monk having charge of serving the food and another charge of clearing away and seating the brethren in their proper places. All through the meals someone read lessons from the scriptures and monks were to pay more attention to what they were hearing than to what they were eating. The food was very simple and plain but good and wholesome and well cooked. Bread and fish was a regular part of the monastic diet, since Basil referred to this simple fare as being that which Christ fed to the multitudes. Water was the usual drink, but wine was allowed. Here again Basil digressed from the old Pachomian Rule which forbade the monk any wine at all. Monks could not be dainty nor greedy toward the food. Strict fasts self-imposed were forbidden, for Basil counted these as self-will and vain-glory.¹ The object of food was to make the monk a better workman for the Kingdom of God. In writing to his friend Gregory of Nazianzus he said:

For a man in good health, bread will suffice, and water will quench his thirst; such dishes of vegetables may be added as conduce to strengthening the body for the discharge of its functions. One ought

1. Clarke, Op. Cit., p. 86

not to eat with a exhibition of savage gluttony, but in everything that concerns our pleasures to maintain moderation, quiet, and self-control. (1)

The monk was to have a distinctive dress.

Something to think about is the fact that soldiers and sailors have uniforms significant of their professions, why, then, should it be so strange for one in the religious profession to wear a garb of significance? Basil's monks were not allowed to have one garb for work and another for leisure but were to be content with the same clothing night and day. Now on the other hand this was more austere than Pachomius Rule which provided linen singlets for sleeping. Uniformity in dress was desirable, and the monk's habit was not to be of a gay color. It was to be of very poor yet durable material. Clothing made of hair was to be worn only as an act of penance and had to be assigned by one of the father confessors to the penitent. In each monastery there was an official appointed to look after the clothing and assign the proper weights for the proper seasons. Again writing to Gregory, Basil gives his idea of what is the proper clothing for a monk:

1. Schaff and Wace, Op. Cit., Vol. VIII., p. 112

The tunic should be fastened to the body by a girdle, the belt not going high over the waist, like a women's, or left slack, so that the tunic flows loose, like an idlers. The one aim of dress is that it should be a sufficient covering alike for winter and summer. As to color, avoid brightness, and in material avoid that which is bright and soft and delicate. Shoes should be cheap but servicable. In a word, what one has to regard in dress is the necessary. (1)

"If a man will not work; neither let him eat²." Thus wrote St. Paul the Apostle in writing to the Church in Thessalonika. Thus counselled Antony to the hermits in the desert. Thus counselled Pachomius at Tabennisi, and so counselled Basil in his Rule. From the very earliest days of monasticism this had been the basic rule regarding work. More work and different kinds of work have been emphasized by the various rules. Antony required only that amount which was sufficient for keeping the monk alive, but Pachomius gave very rigid rules for work in his monastery. There were many crafts in which the monks were to work. Basil ruled that everyone must work for his daily bread. He says that work is to be undertaken, not merely for keeping the body in subjection, but for the love of one's neighbor, in order that through him God may provide a sufficiency for those who are in want. The day must be ordered in order to

1. Schaff and Wace, Op. Cit., Vol. VIII., p. 112
 2. II Thessalonians 3:10

proper time for work and prayer also. If a monk was found idling away his time, he was given a severe reprimand and subject to strict penance. All had to keep busy either at some trade, or at menial tasks about the kitchen and household. Only those occupations were allowed which did not interfere with or distract from the ordered quietness of the monastery. The materials required for the crafts had to be easily procurable, and the products had to be such as could be easily sold without undue trouble. Before all else, however, the Basilian monk was to work for the good of others. Weaving and shoe-making were not regarded as regular occupations but were only for supplying the needs of the communities. Most of the brethren were employed in agricultural pursuits, carpentering, and building. No one was exempt from the domestic duties which included washing dishes, sweeping, waiting on table, and ironing. Perhaps what some housewives refer to today as "kitchen drudgery." All these had to be done and that cheerfully. Basil pronounces a curse on those¹ who do the work of the Lord negligently.

The third part of the Rules of Basil are concerned with the question of order and discipline.

1. Morison, Op. Cit., p. 85

It should be recalled that Antony had no authority, outside of a spiritual one, over those who gathered around his abode in the desert. It was exactly the opposite with Pachomius who vested his abbot with tremendous power and ultimate authority over all the monasteries. Basil did not relax the Pachomian Rule one jot or tittle. He endowed the abbot with even more power than Pachomius was wont to give his. He gave the abbot a committee of officials, so to speak, who were to help him exercise his power and manage the monastery. "As there is one aim for all the members of the brotherhood, so also must there be one source¹ of authority," said Basil. We begin now to see the development of the office of abbot not as just one person in whom is vested the authority of the monastery, but in whom is to be found a spiritual father. The abbot is never to lose contact with his monks from now on. All the private secrets of the heart are to be disclosed to him, and he must set an example of kind affection for those around him. He becomes a physician of souls always having the proper remedy for each man's sickness. From now on the whole welfare of the community depends upon him.

1. Morison, Op. Cit., p. 52

The abbot was not to be appointed but elected to office by the senior brethren of the community. He had to consult his brethren concerning weighty matters and had to consent wilfully to receive such admonition as they saw fit to give him. When the abbot was absent, the second in command took over and supervized until his return lest, as Basil put it, "a state of democracy should arise." He also said:

The abbot must not exalt himself lest he fail to obtain the blessing that is promised to the humble, or, by his pride, fall into the condemnation of the devil; but rather let him be assured that the charge of the many is the service of the many. (1)

There were certain minor officers each with his own task to perform within the monastery. For example, the steward had charge of the commissariat; the cellarer had oversight of the wine stores, and the overseer had charge of the workrooms. Similarly also the sacristan who had care of the chapels, and the chimier whose duty it was to sound the calls to prayer. Of great importance was the Council of the Senior Brethren who have already been mentioned as being the advisory board to the abbot. Basilian monasticism bears the first democratic sign yet to be seen. At least the monks are beginning to have some voice in their government and a chance to address

1. Schaff and Wace, Co. Cit., Vol. VIII., p. 113

grievances to their abbot without fear of expulsion.

There were two ways by which a monk could leave the monastery after having taken vows. He had promised to obey, and his obedience had to be absolute. If he persisted in disobedience, then he was subject to expulsion. Profession in the religious life of a Basilian house was permanent since the vows were taken solemnly before God and in the presence of all the brethren. Breaking one's profession was a sin against God and a sacrilege against the Church. There was another way, an honorable way, by which the monk could leave. Basil says:

If he has genuine grievances for which he cannot get redress, then he may leave the brotherhood, for they are no longer brothers, but strangers, whom he is leaving." (1)

We have the first mention of compulsory Sacramental Confession in a monastic rule in Basil's two Rules. He desired it of all his monks for their own benefit. All sins were to be confessed to the abbot or to a member of the senior brethren. He says:

We do not reveal diseases to anyone, but only those who are skilled in healing diseases. Similarly we confess our sins to those who know how to heal, the strong who know how to bear the infirmities of the weak, that is, to the members of that charismatic ministry.(2)

1. See Clarke, Op. Cit., p. 96

2. Ibid., p. 97

And again in answer to the question how are the faults of sinners to be corrected, he answers:

Correction should be applied to the wrong-doer after the manner of the physician, who is not angry with his patient, but fights against the disease. Thus the vice must be attacked, and the infirmity of the soul corrected, if necessary by a somewhat severe regimen. For example, pride will be corrected by ordering the practice of humility, foolish talking by silence, immoderate sleep by wakefulness in prayer, slothfulness by work, greediness by abstinence from food, and discontent by seperation from the rest of the brethren. (1)

The punishment inflicted by the abbot was to be considered as remedial and endured without murmuring.

The abbot was not designed to be an old tyrant, but had to remember that it was his duty to instruct his monks in the best way, so they would be able at all times to work out their own salvation.

The fourth division of the Rules is concerned with the conduct of the individual while in the monastery. Under no circumstances was the abbot to allow the monks to visit their relatives outside the monastery. When relatives came to visit in the monastery, they were referred to the guest-master who took them to the one they wished to see. The general routine of the monastic

schedule was not to be interrupted, nor was there to be any special food provided for guests. Journeys were considered contrary to the spirit of the life. The sooner journeys would be allowed; the sooner would all vestige of religious enclosure disappear. Journeys were allowed for those under strained circumstances, but when the monk returned home he had to render a detailed account of his journey to the abbot and receive praise or blame whichever the case might be.

Charitable and educational work in the outside world began with Basil. His monks were instructed to "feed the hungry." Every monastery had its almoner who supervised the distribution of alms to the poor. The first hospitals were opened in connection with the monasteries, and schools of learning grew up in connection with them also. There was a sort of loose federation among the monasteries. If one was poor, a wealthier house had to come to its aid, and where two houses were close together, they were urged to merge into one. Convents for women existed alongside the monasteries for men, and the monks were to have spiritual oversight of the sisters. Likewise, it was their duty to celebrate the Holy Eucharist for them also. Here Basil's Rule is Pachomian again, for the abbot rules the convent through the mother superior and must hear the confessions of the sisters.

The whole of Basil's Rules are steeped in scripture. Every rule within the Rules is prefixed by a proof text in the Bible, for he wished to support his teaching through the medium of an authority which could not easily be questioned.

The subsequent influence which Basil's Rules had was the establishing of the Cenobia as the central form of monasticism throughout the East. Eastern monasticism is Basilian monasticism to this day with but few changes. Through all these centuries the monks of the East have adhered loyally to the precepts of the great doctor who formed their rule.

In the last analysis, Eastern monasticism has not grown in proportion to its rival in the West. Many of the fine points of Basil's Rules have been tampered with, and some have been obliterated altogether. The monk in the East today is content to be shut up in his monastery where he is far from the world on the outside and nearer to God on the inside. The future of monasticism lies in the West after Basil's death. Benedict, who is considered the reformer of monasticism in the West, actually drew a great deal from the Rules of St. Basil. If forced to describe Benedictine and Basilian monasticism in one sentence, we could cite three main principles in both, absolute obedience, simplicity of living, and constant occupation.

CHAPTER V

MONASTIC PRECURSORS IN THE WEST

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The conquest of the Roman Empire by the Barbarian races from the North gave rise to these questions: Who will discipline these indomitable hordes? Who will shape them into great races? Who will soften without enervating them? Who will prevent them from corruption and contagion? Who will civilize them? The answer was to be found in the Christian Church, but the Church through the monks. Gradually the silent, black-robed men from the East invade the old Empire, and silently and effectively pervade the whole Barbarian horde. The Barbarians without the monks would have been chaos, but guided, taught, and educated by the monks, they were to grow into a world which was to be known eventually as Christendom.

It is with this thought that the monks came West to educate and take up where a polluted, once proud Empire had failed. It is with this thought also that we begin the fifth chapter which is to deal with the foundation of monasticism in the Western portion of the Roman Empire. This great monastic movement which had its origin in the Egyptian deserts divided itself into two great arms; the one extended over the East, inundated everything, and then lost itself before the oncoming Mohammedans; the other

extended into the West where it thrived and lives on to the present day. Our attention is now drawn toward this latter arm.

There is no one person who has ever been able to say just when the first infiltration of monks into the West took place. We do have recorded for us several names of personages who were responsible for introducing the monastic life into the West, among these we count Athanasius, Ambrose, Augustine, Martin of Tours, Honoratus and Cassian, all of whom were eminent theologians and historians who had at one time in their life come in contact with monasticism as it existed in Palestine and Egypt. All are responsible for having planted seeds in the West.

Athanasius was the Bishop of Alexandria in Egypt at the time of the great Arian controversy. He was exiled five times from his see city by the Emperor. Historians say that twice he fled into the desert of Egypt where he hid himself among the monks. We know how he loved it there, for he writes of the tranquillity of the monastic life and how he heartily approved of it. His three other exilic journeys took him into the West. In 340 A.D. he came to Rome for the first time and there invoked the protection of Pope Julius.

His Holiness received Athanasius with gratitude for having had the courage to withstand Arius to his face, and he accorded him the full protection of the Vatican. It was at this time that Rome first received a full report of the life being led by the monks in the plains of Egypt. Athanasius had brought with him two of the most austere of these monks by the names of Ammonias¹ and Isidore. On his subsequent visits to Rome Athanasius preached the monastic life, and when in later years he wrote the Life of St. Antony, he became the hero of the age in the eyes of the Western Church and was proclaimed the oracle of the Church. Almost immediately the towns and environments of Rome were filled with monasteries in which were to be found many of the wealthy classes. The word monk, at one time shunned by the public, now became the by-word of the hour. From Rome the movement spread all over Italy and into the Northern regions inhabited by the Barbarians. Another strain was founded in Gaul of which more will be said later. Monasticism was a tree planted in Rome whose roots reached back into Egypt and Asia Minor but whose branches and flowers were destined to spread throughout Europe and beyond in the ages to come.

¹ Montalembert, The Monks of the West (New York: Kennedy., 1912), Vol. I., p. 223

From Rome the streams of salvation flow out to the Barbarians until all will come to know that Christ is the Saviour of men. Athanasius has planted the tree, but Benedict will water it until it grows into the mighty branches leaves of which will burst into bloom in all the world.

This new movement had a tremendous effect upon the Roman nobility. Montalembert says:

The Spirit of God breathed upon souls. It was, above all, in the midst of the Roman nobility that the words of Athanasius fell like thunder and inspired all hearts. These old patrician families which had founded Rome, which had governed her all during the period of her splendor and liberty, and which overcame and conquered the world, had expiated for four centuries under the atrocious yoke of the Caesars, all that was most hard and selfish in the glory of their fathers. Cruelly humiliated, disgraced, and decimated during that long servitude, by the masters degenerate Rome had given herself, they found at last in Christian life, such as was practiced by the monks, the dignity of sacrifice and the emancipation of the soul. These sons of the old Romans threw themselves into it with the magnanimous fire and persevering energy which had gained for their ancestors the Empire of the world. (1)

Where heretofore there were few wealthy and powerful among the Christians, now there are many who embrace monasticism and thus enter the Church also. Many noble ladies gave up their estates and entered the cloister.

St. Jerome, during his sojourn in Rome, spread the monastic life with much zeal as success. He had been instrumental in founding a convent for women. He admonished many wealthy Romans to make pilgrimages to Palestine and Egypt where they could observe monasticism in flower.

In 385 A.D. we find several monasteries flourishing outside the City of Milan which was the Episcopal See of Ambrose. He fostered both men and women in monasteries and convents and wrote volume after volume expounding the virtues of virginity. Many monasteries were to be found on the isles off the coast of Italy. These also Ambrose vigorously defended against accusations of pagan writers who deplored the forsaking of the charming life of dissipation. It was in Milan in the same year that the inspired language of Ambrose reached the ears of a young man from Hippo in Africa by the name of Augustine. He was eventually converted to Christianity and became a monk. He made a tremendous contribution to the development of monasticism in the West by introducing a rule of his own contribution.

With Augustine we find a parallel of what today is called a "Pious Society" in the Roman Catholic Church. Probably his monastery of clerics which he founded in

his house in Hippo was the first precursor of these societies. These clerics took no vows, but made a profession to live together in what might be called a "clergy house" and to worship, work, and pray together.

Augustine is justly regarded as having introduced the monastic order for both sexes into the Church of Africa. The Rule which he composed in 423 A.D. is divided into twenty-four articles. It was sent to calm the dissensions of a group of reprobate sisters in a monastery of his own foundation. It is in the form of a letter and has been known ever since its compilation as St. Augustine's Rule. Now there was no complete rule written prior to that of St. Benedict in 530 A.D., but Benedict used Augustine's Rule to a great extent as did the founders of monasticism in Gaul. Charlemagne in 800 referred to it and made it one of the chief sources for a new reformed monastic code. The Lerin's Rule is drawn completely from St. Augustine, and St. Dominic eight centuries later used it as a basis for the Order of Preachers(Dominicans). Remember that Augustine himself did not belong to any particular order, but he made rules for other orders and lived a monastic life.

The Rule of St. Augustine which is contained in his two hundred and eleventh letter is as follows: It

is very brief with scarcely eleven divisions.

The Rules which we lay down to be observed by you as persons settled in a monastery are these:

1. Let all things be common property; food and clothing being distributed to you by the prioress. Everyone shall receive according to her need.
2. Let not those who have left a life of wealth be puffed up and proud in the presence of those who have come into the monastery from a life of poverty.
3. Let all live in unanimity and concord, and in each other give honor to that God whose temples you have been made.
4. Be regular in prayers at the appointed hours and times. In the oratory let no one do anything else than the duty for which the place is made. Chant nothing but what you find prescribed to be chanted.
5. Keep the flesh under by fastings and by abstinence from meat and drink so far as health allows. (Here Augustine enjoins the reading at meals). Do not feel grieved if you see others receiving more food than you. They are convalescents and need it to regain their health.
6. Let your apparel be in no wise conspicuous: aspire to please others by your behavior rather than by your attire.
7. Abstain from wanton looks towards strangers and one another.
8. Keep your clothes in one (specific) place.
9. Let your clothes be washed at such intervals as are approved by the prioress; let the washings of the body and the use of baths be not constant, but at the usual interval assigned to it, i.e. once a month.
10. Quarrels should be unknown among you, or at least,

if they arise they should as quickly as possible be terminated, lest anger grow into hatred and convert a "mote into a beam," and make the soul chargeable with murder.

11. Obey the prioress as a mother, giving her all due honor that God may not be offended by your forgetting what you owe to her. Still more must you obey the presbyter who has charge of you all. To the prioress belongs the responsibility of seeing that all rules are observed. All offenses must be punished. Let the prioress show herself before all a pattern of good works. Let her warn the unruly, comfort the sick, and be patient toward all.

Finally, each sister shall read the Rule through once a week. (1)

We can readily see how Augustine drew many of his ideas from Pachomius and Basil. Nothing is embodied in the Rule which has not previously been touched on in some way by the two cenobiarchs preceding Augustine.

When asked what was the basis of the religious life, Augustine replied that poverty and work was the basis. The second important source for monasticism in the age of transition is Augustine's treatise De Opere Monachorum² or "Of the Work of Monks." When Benedict wrote his Rule,

1. Schaff, Phillip, Ed: A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church (First Series) (New York: Christian Literature Co., 1887), Vol. I., Letter CCXI., p. 563

2. Schaff, Phillip, Op. Cit., Vol. III., p. 547

the chapter on labor was manifestly inspired by this treatise. Here again we find the sentence, "if any will not work; neither let him eat."¹ Augustine uses for an example Paul and Barnabas who worked for their living while preaching the Gospel, because they did not wish to burden the Church in any way. They worked in order to be examples to others. It is the same way with monks. He says; "a monk must work or else he appears to be a seller of the Gospel."²

Monasteries were roughly based on eclectic combinations of the Pachomian and Basilian Rules, for in 397 Rufinus brought a free translation of the Basilian Rule to Italy which had immediate effect.³ This was the first time any Rule of St. Basil had been introduced into the West.

Monasticism came to Italy in 340 A.D. Four years prior to this it had been introduced into Southern Gaul and through the same channels. Athanasius had been exiled in 336 to the City of Treves in Southern Gaul. Montalembert says that he "inspired all the clergy of Gaul with his ardor for the Nicene Faith and for the

1. II Thessalonians 3:10

2. Schaff, Phillip, Op. Cit., Vol. III., p. 346

3. Kirk, The Vision of God (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1931), p. 119

noble example of the solitaries in Egypt." From Treves monasticism spread rapidly through Gaul and was first systematically established by the greatest and most lastingly popular man of the Gallican Church, Martin of Tours. Martin as a child ran away from home at the age of ten intent upon becoming a monk of the hermit type then prevalent in Gaul. At fifteen he was seized by the government and "drafted" into the army. During the years of servitude he lived in frugality and austerity as was the life becoming a monk. After his release he went to Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers who ordained him to minor orders. Soon afterwards Hilary was banished into Asia Minor, and Martin went to Milan where he entered one of the monasteries under the patronage of Ambrose.

In 360 Hilary and Martin both returned to Gaul, and outside the gates of Poitiers Martin founded a monastery. At first he dwelt alone leading the life of a hermit, but as had been the case with Antony, admirers began gathering around him until he found himself in a semi-eremetical community. He organized this community into the great monastery of Liguge which is called the first of its kind in Gaul. We do not know exactly what the rules were, but they are said to have been a mixture

of Pachomian and "Antonian."

He did not remain at its head for very long, for a few years after he was drawn from the cloister by a pious fraud to become bishop of a Northern city called Tours. Martin was an humble Christian, and did not want the high office, but the people clamored for him, and he was forced to accept. The Episcopate meant little to him compared with his monastic life which he would not forfeit. He remained the same humble person as before his elevation. He wore the same poor clothing, ate the same simple food, and worked with his hands. Thus he showed all the dignity of the Episcopate without relinquishing the manner of his life, and the virtue which was his in the monastic state. For some time he dwelt in a cell near the cathedral but soon interruptions forced him to flee into the wilderness outside the city walls. He lived there with a group of monks in a wooden cell, very inaccessible, and with only a rude covering for protection from the elements. This monastery is still intact and is called Marmoutier.

Monceaux, in writing about Marmoutier says:

No one possessed personal property, everything was in common. To buy or to sell, as did many monks, was strictly forbidden. No arts, save that of

1. Monceaux, Life of St. Martin (London: Sands and Co., 1928), p. 109

transcribing were practiced, and even this work was reserved for the younger monks, the older ones being entirely given up to prayer. The monks rarely left their cells except to meet together in a spot appointed for public prayer. They all ate together after the great fast; they never touched wine unless compelled by sickness to do so. The great number were clothed in camel's hair, for in this place it was a sin to wear dainty clothing. (1)

Many of the monks who gathered at Marmoutier were of noble birth, and many in after years became leaders in the Church. It is hard to classify Marmoutier as a monastery of the cenobitic type. It seems more likely to be on the order of an eclectic combination of the semi-eremitic and the cenobitic.

At the beginning of the fifth century(410) a man named Honoratus landed on the tiny island of Lerins off the coast of Southern Gaul and built what was later known as the famous monastery of Lerins. At this time a community of austere monks and indefatigable laborers was formed. At the same time Lerins had a rival in the monastery of St. Victor at Marseilles which was on the mainland. This great monastery had been founded in the same year by John Cassian who had lived for several years in the Egyptian deserts. He had brought a wealth of information to Gaul, and in 419-426 wrote his Twelve Institutes of the Cenobia depicting

life in monasteries of the Pachomian obedience. He applied this knowledge to the organization of St. Victor which became a Pachomian monastery.

Martin, Honoratus, and Cassian are considered the seeds of monasticism in Gaul. The movement spread rapidly through the country and into England and Ireland by Gallic missionaries.¹ The Christianization of Gaul and Brittain was due to the monks. Towards the end of the fifth century monasticism was at a stand still and threatened with stagnation. Here and there were a few scattered houses still strong and impregnable, but monasteries in general suffered. A new energetic impulse was needed such as would concentrate and discipline all the irregular forces; a uniform and universally accepted rule was badly needed. The future had to be secured. God provided for and secured the future by giving Benedict to the Church and his Rule to the religious world.

1. Patrick is believed to have been a product of Marmoutier while Augustine of Canterbury is believed to have come from Lerins.

CHAPTER VI

THE RULE OF ST. BENEDICT

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At the close of the fifth century Europe was in the throes of another conflict—that of the Barbarians from the North. Imperial Rome had fallen never to rise again; her populations had been enslaved, and everywhere there was corruption, confusion, despair and death. The Church was more than ever infected with heresies, schisms and divisions. It was said that in all the fallen Empire there was not one prince who was not either a Pagan, an Arian, or a Eutychian.¹ Monastic institutions suffered along with the rest. In several places monks had given examples of disorderly conduct, and their names were too often linked with scandal.

Upon this scene of ruin and of seemingly utter desolation comes Benedict of Nursia titled the "Father of Western Christian Monasticism." He it is who will bring monasticism out of a condition of chaos, legislate it, and give it a name to be proud of. We shall see Benedict reform the secular church through the regular by his "Holy Rule", and restore the monk to his original piety.

1. Montalembert, The Monks of the West (New York: Kenedy and Co., 1912), p. 306

A rule was what was so sorely needed; a rule which would serve to unite monasticism and establish it firmly in the land now peopled by these wild Barbarians from the North. After all, the monks are the ones who will eventually convert all of Europe. Benedict realized the tremendous task which was set before him. He had to gather together the remnants and mold them into an orderly system; a system which would endure the ravages of time.

Meticulously Benedict examined all the hitherto existing rules which had been written by the saints of Egypt and Asia Minor; he inserted here, struck out there, readjusted in places, supplied rules of his own composition, and out of it all he comes with his own superb Rule which has bound monasticism together until this very day. We will refer to it as The Holy Rule of St. Benedict.

Benedict's Rule will unite Gallican monasticism heretofore an eclectic combination of rules drawn from the Eastern fathers. It is this Rule which will serve for all the monastic institutions in the countries to be converted to the faith. It is this Rule which will come across the oceans to the new lands to follow the Catholic Church wherever she goes on her mission of conversion.

Benedict was born of a noble family in 480 in

the Sabine town of Nursia, Italy. He was only fourteen when he decided to renounce the fortune of the family, and the luxury of this world. He made his way to the almost inaccessible town of Subiaco where, dressed in skins and haircloth, and living in a cave, he remained for three years. He led an ascetic life comparable to that of St. Antony of Egypt. He ate but once a day and then only a loaf of bread and a little water. When subjected to visions of delight, he would roll naked in a thorn patch until his passions were quieted. Such was the hard and savage cradle of monasticism in the West, but from this fountain will burst the fervent religious zeal of the ages. Here in Subiaco Benedictine monasticism had its birth.

Benedict was not allowed to remain alone for long. Numerous of the faithful sought him out as they had done long ago in Egypt to Antony. The monks of a neighboring monastery asked him to become their ruler, but soon disgusted with his mode of asceticism, they endeavored to poison him by placing a drug in his drinking cup. He made the sign of the cross over the cup, and it shattered¹ as though it had been struck by a stone. He retired to his cave once more, but the hermits would not give him

1. Montalembert, Op. Cit., p. 311

any rest, so he resolved to organize them and set up a Cenobium. He founded twelve monasteries containing so many monks each and presided over them as superior for thirty-two years. He then gathered a group of devoted monks around him and left Subiaco forever making his way to Monte Cassino where he founded a monastery which became the head of the Benedictine Order. It is here at Monte Cassino that Benedict wrote his Rule, and it is here that he remained for the rest of his life. He died in 543 A.D.

Like his predecessor in Asia Minor, Benedict did not withdraw from the world. He went out in it to convert the heathen, feed the hungry, heal the sick, and give alms to the poor. He was called the friend of the people. He bound up patrician and plebeian and rich and poor under the same discipline. He became a pious example of charity.

What was needed was a rule for everyone. A rule which would fit the Western world. Benedict saw from the first the danger of adopting Eastern ideals for Western monasticism. It just couldn't be done. There had already been trouble in Gaul where numerous complaints against the Pachomian Rule had made it unsuitable. These Eastern rules were just simply not suited to Western climates. Clothing

had to be heavier, and what was plenty to eat for Egyptian hermits in that hot climate of the South was not anything at all for the husky Gallican monks of the cold North. Cassian in Marseilles soon found it necessary to insert mitigations into Egyptian practices to make them possible for European climates. One of the aims of Benedict's Rule was to change all this. Again, at the close of the fifth century, monks in Italy were becoming discouraged and demoralized consequent to an abiding sense of failure. It was the aim of Benedict's Rule to obliterate this feeling. Benedict did not wish to insist upon the practices of austerity and penitential exercises as the Egyptian monks knew these terms. His reformation of monasticism was bold and novel. He very wisely secured the old ideals of austerity and penance by moderation and common-sense ruling over men. He believed in the same degree of prayer and work, perhaps to a greater extent, but he harnessed these to obedience, authority, and discipline. Asceticism was made possible through sufficient food, adequate clothing, and proper sleep. For example, Benedict did not think a monk should be subject to fitful slumber interrupted by frequent calls to prayer, and therefore, he made his monks sleep eight hours a day in order to fit themselves for a higher

degree of attainment in monastic discipline. He required of all who would be members of his order strict adherence to the Rule. However, he did not prohibit other practices and customs not at variance with it. He often refers his monks to the Pachomian and Basilian Rules. An interesting sideline is the fact that though Italy was the cradle of Benedictine monasticism, perhaps the country in which it had its greatest effect was Gaul (France).

At the time of the composition of the Rule, and in chapter one, Benedict lists the kinds of monks then¹ existent. In the first place he puts the Cenobites, or those who live in a monastery under the rule of an abbot. The second kind are hermits, who having lived in a monastery and being perfected in the art of prayer and fasting, have gone to live in the deserts. The third kind are² called Sarabites. Of these he speaks boldly:

The third and worst kind of monks is that of the Sarabites, who have not been tried under any rule nor schooled by an experienced master, as gold is proved in the furnace, but soft as lead and still in their works cleaving to the world, are known to lie to God by their tonsure. The pleasure of carrying out their own desires is their law, and whatever they dream of or choose, this they call holy; but what they like not, that they account unlawful. (3)

1. Gasquet, Cardinal, Tr: The Rule of St. Benedict (London: Chatto and Windus, 1936), p. 7

2. Cassian also refers to these in his Institutes of the Cenobia.

3. Gasquet, Op. Cit., p. 6

The fourth class of monks are called Gyrovagi or Wandering Monks. These wander about the country begging their bread and lodging. They never settle down and are "slaves to their own wills and to the enticements of gluttony." Benedict says that the Sarabites are bad enough, but the former are worse.

The "Holy Rule" is written strictly for cenobitical monasticism. It is rather long and consists of seventy-three chapters. According to the Rule, the monks were to be occupied in manual labor, reading, and above all the recitation of the Liturgy in the church. Craftsmanship as well as manual was to be cultivated also. Above every duty Benedict places the recitation of the "Opus Dei" or the Divine Office. Nothing is to be preferred to this part of the community life, for monks were primarily monks for the sake of prayer and praise.

In the Egyptian houses the monks had been subject to the abbot who could dispense them from the observance of any part of the Rule, what is more, the abbot himself could be dispensed. Benedict changes this to read that the abbot shall see to it that all the monks observe the Rule and that he (the abbot) is also responsible for its observance.

1. Lasquet, Op. Cit., p. 9

For the purpose of convenience and the sake of clarity the Rule of St. Benedict will be arranged so as to fit the Rules of Pachomius and Basil as they have been discussed heretofore in this thesis.¹

- I. Joining the monastery.
- II. Life in the monastery.
- III. Order and discipline.
- IV. Various other points.
- V. Relations with the outside world.
- VI. Biblical foundation.

You will doubtlessly remember that for every rule which Basil formed he gave a proof text from the Bible. This system is repeated in Benedict who gives Biblical foundation for every rule within his Rule. Benedict, like Basil, felt that scripture would give the Rule much greater authority.

In withdrawing from the world Benedict commanded that his followers give up their families and fortunes, and seek whole heartedly the religious life. He did not, as did his predecessor Basil, suggest that men withdraw from the sinners of the world. Benedict taught his monks to have always a heart of fire for charity, and a heart of bronze for chastity. They had been sent

1. Reference is made to the outline on page 60 of this manuscript.

for the purpose of doing good works, and how were they to do them lest they mingle with the sinful and the sick of heart. Benedict himself set the example by going about the neighboring countryside around Monte Cassino caring for the sick and burying the dead. In coming to the monastery, a monk must give up everything which he owns or has access to, for he will be given his needs in the monastery. All wealth had to be disposed of before entering and none could be given to the monastery. In chapter fifty-eight of the Rule we find the manner of receiving and admitting one to the religious community. Benedict was as strict as Pachomius in his rules for reception. "Those who come to be monks", says Benedict, "must not find the entrance made easy, for the monks shall try their spirits, if they be of God."¹ A very severe procedure was followed. First of all the would-be monk had to continue knocking for five days on the door of the monastery demanding entrance. This was to prove his patience. After the five day wait he was admitted to the guest house where he remained for a week. From the guest house he was received into the novitiate where² he was to meditate, eat, and sleep. A senior monk was

1. St. John IV:1

2. Novitiate here refers to a place in the monastery building set aside for the reception of candidates.

appointed to watch and report the progress of the candidate. He was also to explain the rigors and the austerity of the monastic life to the candidate so that he might go back into the world before committing himself to a rule which he could not follow. At an interval of two months the entire Rule was to be read to him and the necessity of keeping the Rule in its entirety was to be made clear and emphatic. If he thought he could not endure the Rule, he was asked to depart. Again the candidate was returned to the novitiate where he was further tested in all patience. After six months had expired, the Rule was read again, and after four more months it was read a third time. If the candidate received the Rule, he was taken into the order and the Rule was binding upon him immediately. The novitiate was to last one year. His was quite an improvement over the three years of hard labor prescribed by Pachomius. Having accepted the Rule, the new monk had to be received into the community. Benedict gave the manner in which it was to be done. He said:

Let him in the Oratory, and in the presence of all, promise before God and His saints stability, amendment of manners, and obedience, in order that if at any time he shall act otherwise he may know that he shall be condemned by Him whom he acknowledgeth. He shall draw up his promise in the name of the saints,

.....let him write out this form himself,
and to this the novice shall set his mark
 and with his own hand lay it upon the altar. (1)

Then after the intonation of a verse from the psalms,
 he shall cast himself down at the feet of the brethren
 assembled and ask their prayers in his behalf. If he
 has property, it must be given to the poor or to the
 monastery.² The remaining points of the service of ad-
 mission were that he should be divested and re-vested
 in the oratory. His worldly clothes were to be stored
 in the wardrobe for keeping until "he should, by persuasion
 of the devil, resolve to leave the monastery."³ In such
 a case he was stripped of his habit and expelled.⁴

In Chapters thirty-three and sixty-three the
 question of the principle of the common life is answered.
 Benedict makes it quite clear that no one in the monastery
 could own private property. He says:

No one without leave of the abbot, shall presume
 to give or receive, or keep as his own, anything
 whatever: neither book, nor tablets, nor pen:
 nothing at all. For monks are men who claim no
 dominion even over their own bodies or wills.
 All things are to be common to all. Hence if any
 shall be found given to this most wicked vice, let
 be admonished once or twice, and if he do not
 mend, let him be subject to correction. (5)

1. Gasquet, Op. Cit., p. 101

2. This is new. Pachomius and Basil did not per-
 mit this at all.

3. Gasquet, Op. Cit., p. 102

4. Pachomius and Basil both agree to this.

5. Gasquet, Op. Cit., Chapter 60

Out of seventy-three chapters in the Rule sixteen are devoted to the discussion of the "Opus Dei" or Divine Office. Labor, obedience, and prayer were the three things which a monk had to fulfill before anything else. His whole life was one long prayer. Benedict laid great stress on the importance of the Holy Liturgy of the Church. The monks were to give themselves seven times a day to the formal recitation of the offices. Then there was another office to be recited in the night season. The hundred and fifty psalms of David were divided up among these seven offices in such a manner that the whole Psalter would be chanted in a week's time. In the remaining hours of the day there was to be more private prayer and meditation.

There were three schedules a year for the recitation of the "Opus Dei:" the winter schedule, the summer schedule, and the Lenten schedule. Matins (the night office) was begun at approximately two-thirty A.M. and lasted until four. Prayers were then chanted until day-break when Lauds was recited just before the dawn broke. Prime followed at six-thirty and was considered the first office of the day. Reading from seven-thirty to nine-thirty was followed by manual labor from nine-forty-five to two-thirty P.M. with one interruption for Terce and Sext at ten o'clock.

None was chanted at two-thirty followed by a meal at three. Vespers was chanted at four and the day closed with Compline at six after which all retired for the night.¹ When the Rule was first put into effect, Mass was chanted only on Saturdays, Sundays and Holy Days, but when the custom of daily celebrations comes into effect, Mass is celebrated at the beginning of the tenth hour. The foregoing procedure was modified considerably during Lent, when, strange to relate, Mass was celebrated late in the afternoon just before Vespers. Preceding the Community Mass private masses were offered at the several altars. In the winter season Mass was sung at the eighth hour. There are several chapters in the Rule which deal with nothing save the regulations which are to be observed in the chanting and recitation of the "Opus Dei." For example, Lauds was different on ordinary days and on festivals; Matins was recited differently in the winter season than in the Lenten season. The meticulous "ins and outs" of the rubrics are too numerous to mention and will be omitted.

Each monk had to do a certain amount of reading. Several hours during the course of the day were set aside for this purpose, and before each meal, someone appointed by the abbot would read a portion of scripture.

1. This is the winter schedule which is the same as the summer one except for a difference in time.

At the beginning of Lent books were assigned to each monk for his spiritual reading. At the end of the chapter meeting which the whole community attended, the abbot went to question each monk on the book which had been assigned to him. If he found the monk had read the book, it was his duty to assign him another. If the monk had not read his book but had been negligent, it was the duty of the abbot to return the book to him with the counsel to read it.¹ A humorous note is found in the sentence; "When the brothers have left the chapter, the abbot will inspect whether all the books on the list are present or accounted for; if they are missing, he will search until they are found."² Would this imply that even the monks took books out of the library without signing for them?

Reference is made to the "Morning Chapter", in the last paragraph. What was it? After Prime the entire community gathered with the abbot in the Oratory to hear the reading of a portion of the "Holy Rule", followed by instruction from the abbot.³

1. Schroll, Benedictine Monasticism (New York: Columbia University Press, 1941), pp. 120-121

2. Loc Cit.

3. This is not formally mentioned in the Rule, but its chief functions are either expressed or implied.

Schroll says: *

Matters for consultation were discussed; transgressions of discipline were acknowledged and public corrections were administered; the duties of the day were assigned, and articles of clothing were distributed as needed. In fine it was a sort of clearing house for the family affairs of the community-spiritual and temporal, instructional and remedial. (1)

Benedict was rather insistent upon the correct and orderly singing of the psalmody in the Divine Office. He counsels the monks in chapter nineteen of the Rule to take care that "mind and voice accord together." Likewise, he counsels them regarding reverence in prayer in chapter twenty of the Rule. He says:

.....and we should present our petitions to the Lord God of the Universe in all lowliness of heart and pureness of devotion. We may know for certain that we shall be heard, not because we use many words, but on account of the purity of our hearts and our tears of sorrow. Our prayer, therefore, should be short and pure, unless by some inspiration of divine grace it be prolonged. All prayer made by the community in common should be short; and when the prior gives the sign, let all rise together. (2)

Silence was also a part of the prayer life, and Benedict sets a certain time which has come to be known as the Great Silence. This began immediately after Compline and continued through the night hours. If anyone spoke during these hours he was punished. Rules

1. Schroll, Op. Cit., pp. 115-116
 2. Gasquet, Op. Cit., p. 51

were also made for those who came late to chapel and who made blunders in the recitations. Chapter forty-seven is devoted to rules concerning the calls to chapel and how many bells were to be rung. Chapter fifty-two concerns the Oratory of the community. It is the Lord's House and must be used for no other purpose. If any brother wished to pray privately, provision was made for him to go into the Oratory where peace and quiet were assured.

Benedict followed Pachomius and Basil in ordering two meals a day. His Rule on food is largely Basilian with insertions of his own. No wine was allowed in the Pachomian monasteries, and only a very little was allowed by Basil, but Benedict expressly provides for it as being part of the monastic diet. Here is a very good example of the change of rule to fit the Western temperament. Wine was not needed in Egypt a hot sultry climate, but because of its warmth to the body, it was definitely needed in the cold North. We see that wine has always been a part of the Italian and French diets. There were to be two cooked dishes at every meal plus any young vegetables and fruit if there were any in season. Each monk was allotted a pound of bread a day which had¹ to suffice for the two meals. Monks were forbidden to

1. The Rule suggests that at some part of the year only one meal was taken daily. Probably in Lent.

eat anything between meals. The monk had to guard against the sin of gluttony. Pachomius and Basil both demand the abstinence from all flesh meat. Benedict says that they must all abstain from flesh of quadrupeds which implies that fowl was permitted. All three fathers provide for flesh meat for the very sick and convalescent. Meals were scheduled for the sixth and ninth hours in the seasons when two meal were the custom; the one meal season was at eventide. Benedict followed the Basilian Rule in declaring Wednesday and Friday fast days. Benedict also provided for a morsel of bread and wine called the "mixtus" to be taken by those who were appointed to serve tables. These servers were to take the "mixtus" an hour before the community refectioⁿ in order to tide them over until their time of eating which was after all the rest had dined.

Clothing suitable to the locality and the temperature was to be provided and meted out by the abbot. This was the clothing necessary for each monk:

In ordinary places it will be enough for each monk to have a cowl and tunic; in winter the cowl is to be of heavy material, in summer of finer and older cloth. He should have also a scapular for working purposes, and shoes and stockings for the feet. Monks must not grumble at the color and coarseness of things; they shall be such as can be procured in the district where they live, or such as can be bought at the cheapest price.It is sufficient that a monk

have two cowls, two tunics, as well as for night wear as for convenience of washing. Anything beyond this is superfluous, and must be cut off. A mattress, blanket, coverlet, and pillow are to suffice for bedding. (quite a contrast to Pachomius who would not even let his monks recline). The abbot will also furnish each monk with a girdle, knife, pen, needle, handkerchief, and tablets. (1)

Cleanliness in the Benedictine Institutions was not next to Godliness. Clothes were to be washed only at the interval of fifteen days while baths were to be taken but once a month, and clothes, even shoes, were to be worn in bed. Pachomius' Rule was much better here, since he bade his monks sleep in linen singlets which were not a part of their daily habit. The Rule is more Basilian regarding the clothing. Basil ruled that his monks sleep in the same clothing they wore in the day time. It was generally the custom for rules to get better and better, but sometimes they got worse and worse.

"Idleness is the enemy of the soul" said Benedict, and therefore, he inserted a rigid rule for work for every hour of the day and to be accompanied by reading. When the monk was not occupied at anything else, he was reading. Common labor in the fields was the work required of all except those who were especially skilled at any craft. Provision was made, however, that if any craftsman should

develop a superiority complex, he was to be taken away from his craft and made a common laborer in the field. In reading the portion of the "Holy Rule" assigned to work one would think it long and hard. Actually it was not, for the work hours were broken up by hours of prayer and meals. As soon as the bells rang for prayers, the monks were to drop their work and go straight to the Oratory.

1

The admonition of St. Paul, which has appeared as part of all the other Rules, is nowhere quoted by Benedict in his Rule. It is implied however, but he saw no use for quoting it since labor was strictly enforced, even assigned daily, by the abbot.

The greatest improvement in monasticism under Benedict, outside of the "Opus Dei", was the Rule concerning order and discipline. Benedict's Rule is air tight, stern, and severe. Tremendous powers are vested in the abbot; powers which even extend to excommunication. The first degree of humility is obedience as Benedict says:

This is required of all who, whether by reason of the holy servitude to which they are pledged, or through fear of hell, or to attain to the glory of eternal life, hold nothing more dear than Christ. Such disciples delay not in doing

what is ordered by their superior, just as if the command had come from God. (1)

Since the time of Pachomius the abbot had gradually acquired more and more power until the sixth century sees him virtually the ruler of the monastery. The abbot rules his monks, but he must never forget the responsibility for those he rules. He must render an account for each one of them at the day of judgment. If they disobey him it is likely to be a sin of omission on his part for not seeing that they were properly trained. The abbot is subject to scrutiny by him monks says Benedict:

The abbot should neither teach, ordain, nor require anything against the command of Our Lord, but in the minds of his disciples let his orders and teaching be mingled with the leaven of divine justice. When therefore, anyone shall receive the office of abbot, he ought to rule his disciples with a two-fold teaching: that is, he should first show them in deeds rather than words all that is good and holy. Let him make no distinctions of persons in the monastery. Let not one be loved more than another, save such as be found to excel in obedience and good works. The abbot in his teaching should always that apostolic rule which saith reprove, entreat, rebuke. That is to say, as occasions require he ought to mingle encouragement with reproofs. He must punish the stubborn and negligent. The abbot ought ever to bear in mind what he is and what he is called; he ought to know that to

whom more is entrusted, from him more is exacted. Let him realize that he has undertaken the government of souls, of which he shall also have to give account. (1)

The abbot was then the head of the monastery, but he was surrounded by several assistants. If the monastery was a large one, the rule provided for several assistants called deans. These were to have general oversight of a group of monks within the monastery and were to report periodically to the abbot on the state of affairs. Other assistants were provosts, doorkeepers, cellarers, sacristans, and servers. The community itself was divided up into senior and junior brethren, and every action was graded. The seniors presided over the juniors and seating at table was according to rank. Some might think it an aristocratic society, but it was not. It was a society where each had to esteem his brother as better than himself. Each had to regard himself as the servant of the other.

If the monks intentionally broke any of the rules, they were to be punished. If they persisted in breaking rules they were subject to expulsion or excommunication. There was a provision in the Benedictine rule where a monk could be received back into the monastery if he had once left it. This was entirely new,

for Pachomius and Basil would not have tolerated it for a moment. But Benedict says:

If the brother, who through his own bad conduct leaves or is expelled from the monastery, shall desire to return, he must first promise full amendment of the fault for which he left it. He may then be received back to the lowest place, that by this his humility may be tried. If he shall again leave he may be received back to the third time, but he shall know that after this all possibility of returning shall be denied him. (1)

This element of toleration is peculiar throughout the whole Rule of Benedict. Perhaps it is one of the reasons why it has stood as long as it has and has occupied such a prominent place in Catholic Church life.

It was Basil who had laid great importance on confession of sins to those who had been endowed with the charismatic gifts. Benedict does not refer to sacramental confession anywhere in his Rule, but he implies as much in a species of non-sacramental confession to the abbot. The abbot of course was bound to secrecy.

Regarding earthly relationships with parents and relatives, the monk was not able to receive any presents from his family or friends or relations without permission from the abbot first.

Journeys were permitted with permission from the abbot, and the one going on a journey had to recite all the offices while en route to his destination and while he was absent from the monastery walls. He was to stay away from carnivals and fairs while "out in the world", and upon returning home could not speak to anyone of his trip but the abbot.

Chapter four of the Rule is given to the listing of charitable works which the monk must do. He must give refreshment to the poor, clothe the naked, visit the sick, bury the dead, help those in trouble, and comfort those in sadness. Guests were to be treated royally. They were to be given the best of everything especially meat and wines. Monks were admonished to be especially kind to pilgrims since these were on journeys of grace for the sake of Christ. Monks from neighboring monasteries were to be received for as long as they wished to stay, and stranger monks might stay permanently provided they had permission from their own abbot and letters dimissory.

So Benedict becomes the first monk in the West to establish a Rule acceptable to all. From Monte Cassino Benedictine Monasticism spreads over the whole earth. It is from this capital in the hills of Italy that

missionaries will go to Christianize the barbarians. Boniface will go to Germany, Ansgar will Christianize Scandinavia, and Augustine of Canterbury will take Roman Catholicism to England. Wilfred will found Benedictine monasteries throughout Mercia and East Anglia and from the recesses of these great institutions will flow priests, bishops, cardinals, and popes. Benedict had been sent from God to save a crumbling Empire from spiritual stagnation and destruction. He accomplished his mission. He gave the world his Holy Rule.

CHAPTER VII

CONTEMPORARY MONASTICISM IN THE ROMAN

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It is the object of the second part of this thesis to discover exactly the situation regarding monasticism as it stands today in relation to the churches of a divided Catholicism. Thus far we have been concerned with the origin and nature of the monastic institutions in the East and West. Now we shall see just how they have changed through the centuries and how they have remained the same.

To begin with, there have been tremendous changes in the West. The monasteries have kept in step with the steady advance of the Church as it moves through the centuries. Wherever the Catholic Church of the West has Christianized, there beside it, as it were a bulwark, stands the monastic institutions preaching, teaching, healing, and building the Kingdom of God with an untiring effort. We do not hesitate to repeat again the time worn statement that the monasteries have been the bulwarks of the Catholic Church through the centuries. Roughly speaking, these monasteries have been building the Church for sixteen hundred years, for

from the first feeble cry of "Ina culpa" in the Egyptian desert down to the present, a steady flow of devout men and women have kept alive the faith of Our Lord Jesus Christ as it was given to His Holy Church. Out of this innumerable throng have come the saints and martyrs of the ages. Small wonder that the Catholic Religion in the West has grown into the power that it is today.

Contemporary monasticism in the Roman Catholic Church is classified under one of four distinct divisions. Its substance extends everywhere from the regulated yet austere Rule of St. Benedict to a mere congregation of priests and lay brothers bound together, not by vows, not by rules, but by mutual agreement alone to work for an external good. Such "monastic orders" are called Pious Societies of which more will be said later in this chapter. The four great divisions of Roman Catholic monasticism are: Orders, Congregations, Clerks Regular, and Pious Societies. Each will be discussed in general in order to give any reader a distinct picture of the organization and rule of life.

The most important, and at the same time longest established of the Roman Catholic institutions is that

of the Religious Orders or "Ordo Monasticus." The word order is used here in a very strict sense. It is true that the other three divisions are sometimes called "orders", but this is definitely incorrect and uncanonical. There are but six communities in the Roman Catholic Church today which may be called orders, and these are the Benedictines, Augustinians, Cammelites, Dominicans, Franciscans, and Servites. The first order began in the West at the time of St. Benedict in 530 A.D., and the last to be founded was that of the Order of the Servants of Mary, commonly called Servites, in the city of Florence Italy by seven pious merchants. It was approved and declared a religious order by Pope Benedict IX in 1304.¹ Since the founding of the Servites there has been no religious order in the strict sense to be constituted.

The term "religious order" is applied exclusively to monastic institutions with solemn vows, and this is the main principle governing their difference from other monastic organizations. The Roman Catholic Church defines a vow as being "a promise made to God for a better good." Therefore, if it is a promise made to God, it cannot easily be broken or violated. Vows are divided

1. Catholic Encyclopedia Vol. XIII., (New York: Appleton Co., 1911), art: "Servites" by Patrick J. Griffin, p. 736

into two parts: There are private vows which a man makes with himself such as a vow to attend several services a week to pray for a special intention, and there are public vows which a person makes in the presence of a congregation of people. Public vows are divided into two divisions called simple vows and solemn vows. Again, simple vows are divided into two divisions called temporary and perpetual vows. When a religious accepts temporary vows it means that he is bound to obey his vows, but only for a certain length of time. When that length of time is over, he may either leave the religious community or renew his vows for another period of years. He may even decide to take solemn vows which can never be broken without communication. A perpetual vow is one which lasts until death. With this as an introduction, we may begin the rather detailed discussion of the difference between simple and solemn vows.

Since the time of Benedict the three vows of religion have been poverty, chastity, and obedience. The essential difference between a simple and a solemn vow of poverty today is this: Let us assume that

1. Benedict does not name the threefold vow in his Rule, but it is implied. He lists the vows as stability, amendment of manners, and obedience.

monk has entered a monastery and has had to renounce his property. If he makes a simple vow of poverty, it means that while he is alive, he is the sole executor of his estate or property. He still holds the principal, but all the interest that accrues through the years must be given to the religious order of which he is a part. At his death the principle goes to the order unless otherwise provided. This means that he has the right to will it to his family if he so wishes. A solemn vow of poverty is quite different. When a monk makes a solemn vow of poverty it means that he automatically renounces all title to any property which he may possess and gives principle and interest both into the possession of his monastery.

The above is similar to the vow of chastity. When a monk takes a simple vow of chastity, unless he is a priest, he may decide to marry, indeed he may even marry, but if he consummates the marriage he is accused of breaking his vow since he has consecrated his body to God. The breaking of a simple vow of chastity alone is subject to excommunication from the order. A solemn vow of chastity is binding for all time upon the one who has taken it. A monk may not co-habit with women nor may he marry.

Regarding a simple vow of obedience, a monk is bound only to the external act of that vow. Let us say for example, if the abbot commands the monk to do a certain errand, the monk is bound to fulfill the external command, although he may rationalize in his mind as to the motive of the abbot in asking him to do it. He may not agree in mind with his abbot, and indeed, may even perform the duty grudgingly, nevertheless, he is bound to perform the abbot's wish because of his simple vow of obedience. If he refuses to go on the errand he deliberately breaks his simple vow and becomes subject to punishment and even excommunication. Under the solemn vow of obedience the monk must conform outwardly and inwardly with the will of the abbot. In so many words, the will of the abbot is his will.¹

In the time of Basil and Benedict a religious order was the drawing up of a plan for individual life common to the use of monks who desired to lead a life which led to perfection. Each monastery of the Benedictine Order was, and still is, autonomous. The community was left free to change the observance of its rule, and each house was privileged to choose which of

1. The above information is a result of several conversations with the Roman clergy in the City of San Francisco.

several rules within the one Rule it would observe. This system was changed considerably at the time of the foundation of the abbeys of Cluny and Citeaux which prepared the way for modern religious orders. All abbots were made subject to one supreme abbot. St. Francis and St. Dominic both united their followers in one vast association with an interior hierarchical organization of its own and recognizable outwardly by a definite rule, dress, and discipline. Ever since that time each religious order has been a corporation approved by the Church. Therefore, since the Roman Catholic Church distinguishes between institutes bound by solemn vows and approved by the pope, and institutes bound by simple vows, the title "religious orders" has been applied solely to monastic institutions taking solemn vows.

The concise definition of a religious order (any of the six afore mentioned) is an institute fully approved by the pope having solemn vows of poverty,¹ chastity and obedience.

Orders in the Roman Catholic Church are dis-

1. Catholic Encyclopedia Vol XII, (New York: Appleton Co., 1911), art: "Religious Orders" A. Vermeersch, p. 754

tinguished from societies in that they have a seat of authority which is vested in the superior-general of the chapter and the chapter itself. In all religious orders we find the monastery chapter, whether it be the chapter to limit the powers of the abbot and fill a vacancy, or the general chapter to appoint for a definite term a new superior-general. Monks are also distinguished from religious in societies in that they wear a habit perpetually, recite all offices in choir, and are ruled by an abbot. Each monastery must have a daily Conventual Mass celebrated.

The other three divisions of monasticism in the Roman Catholic Church come under the title of Religious Congregations. The first religious congregation ever established was that of the Congregation of the Oratory, commonly called Oratorians, which was founded in the City of Rome in 1566 by St. Philip Neri. This congregation was nothing but an association of priests bound together by mutual agreement and not by vows. In 1611 the Vincentian Order was founded having simple vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. The founder insisted that the congregation be designated secular. Therefore, its vows were not followed by any acceptance

on the part of the Holy See. The association was then designated a congregation. Modern connotation of congregations with no vows whatsoever is Pious Societies. The Catholic Encyclopedia says:

Thus it became usual to designate as congregations those institutes which resembled religious orders, but had not all their essential characteristics. This is the ordinary meaning generally accepted of the word congregation. (1)

Under the term Religious Congregation there occur two distinct divisions. First in order of dignity come the religious congregations properly so-called. They have all the essentials of a religious order, the threefold perpetual vow, the approbation of the Holy See, and a habit, but are lacking one thing which is solemnity of vows. Examples of these religious congregations are the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer (Redemptorists), and The Pious Union of Salesian Co-operators (Salesians). Religious congregation in the wider sense of the term refers to those Pious Societies which have no perpetual vows, or lack one vow, or have none at all. These pious societies are improperly called congregations. Examples of these are the Congregation of St. Paul the

1. Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. XII, (New York: Appleton Co., 1911), art: "Congregation", p. 737

apostle (Paulists), The Society of the Brothers of Mary (Marist), and the Sulpician Fathers.

There remains one division of Roman Catholic monasticism yet to be discussed. These are the Clerks Regular. These are different from the structure of the congregations, orders, and societies, and yet they contain some of the peculiarities of all three. According to canonical status, the Clerks Regular are bodies of men in the Church who make it their purpose to unite the perfection of the religious state to the routine of the priestly office, who, while being essentially clerics devoted to parochial work, endeavor also to lead the religious life in the strict sense of the word. They take solemn vows and live a community life according to a rule solemnly approved by the Holy See. Clerks Regular are separated from the secular clergy in that they live a community life and take solemn vows. Yet they cannot be called an order because of their secular life in parochial work. Monasticism still has its connotations today as it did yesterday, and they have not changed. A monk is one who withdraws from the world. The Clerks Regular do no such thing. They are mainly interested in combining the life of the

monk with that of the secular priest. The best example of this type of monasticism is the Society of Jesus or Jesuits.

All of the religious orders, using the strict meaning here, trace their ancestry back to the Rules of Benedict and Basil. As time went on circumstances arose whereby the old monastic rules could not be followed in their entirety, and hence we have the organizing of these semi-monastic societies within the Church.

The pious societies are the latest addition to the Roman Catholic monastic system, and therefore, it is reasonable that some time be devoted to the discussion of two of these societies. We have chosen the Congregation of St. Paul the Apostle and the Society of the Brothers of Mary.

The idea for the Society of the Brothers of Mary came in 1816 to Father Jean-Claude-Marie Colin in his native city of Lyon, France. Amidst his pastoral cares he began to compose a rule for a society but met with considerable opposition from his diocesan bishop. In 1836 the extremity of Pope Gregory the XVI, in quest of missionaries for Oceania, was the opportunity for Fr. Colin's new society. Accordingly he petitioned the pope for recognition which was granted, and the Society

of the Brothers of Mary came into being. It was to be a pious society having simple vows and a superior-general. The constitutions of the "order", improperly so-called, were improved by the Holy See in 1873. The superior-general resides in Paris and of course in France which was the birthplace of the society. There is a provincial for the American province. The Marists profess three simple vows which rank as perpetual. They profess poverty, chastity, and obedience with a special devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. They take an oath of absolute loyalty to the Holy See, reverence for the hierarchy, and profess an absolute love for the hidden life. Their motto "ignoti et quasi occulti in hoc mundo" suggests this. Their society contains both priests and lay-brothers, and their habit is only a cassock such as an ordinary secular priest wears. They wear this simple garb because it is against the policy of their society to attract attention as the motto suggests. Every priest must read his breviary, but the hours of prayer are not recited in choir. They are not required to offer a daily mass.

The Marist "Order" is a teaching order primarily. They have charge of four schools in America and several in France, and may assume charge of parishes one of which is

1. "Unknown as if hidden in this world let them be seen."

located in San Francisco.¹ They have charge of several schools in the Mid-Pacific islands and especially on Pago-Pago. Preaching missions and giving novenas is another part of their religious life. In the United States there is a seminary for the training of young men for the priesthood.² These candidates for the priesthood are prepared after their classical course is terminated by one year in the novitiate, two years of philosophy, and four years of theology.²

The peculiarity of the Paulist Society is that it is designed and organized for America only. It is a society the aim of which is to "make America Catholic." Father James Gillis in speaking of the society says:

The Charter members of the society were all converts to the Catholic faith. Having come into the fold from without, they had at heart the presentation of the Catholic teaching to the Non-Catholics of their native land, and it was for this specific purpose that "The Missionary Society of St. Paul the Apostle" was established. (3)

The Paulist Society was founded in New York in 1858 by Father Isaac Thomas Hecker who had been a convert to Catholicism. Fr. Hecker had been born of German stock

1. Notre Dame des Victoires (Our Lady of Victories)
 2. Information obtained from a personal interview with the Marist Fathers in San Francisco.
 3. Gillis, The Paulists (New York: Macmillan Co., 1932), p. 2

in New York City in 1819 and was brought up in the Methodist Church by his mother. For the first part of his life he was a skeptic weighing each religion in the balance and finding it wanting. He attended Brook Farm, that experiment in Transcendentalism, but he left after growing tired and disgusted with it. From there he dabbled in Presbyterianism, Mormonism, and Anglicanism before being accepted into the Roman Catholic fold. He was baptized by Bishop Mc. Closkey of New York in 1844. The bishop took him under his patronage and decided for him that he should study for the priesthood and enter a religious order. At that time the Redemptorist Congregation was forming in New York and into this congregation young Hecker went, sailing for the novitiate in Belgium in 1845. It was during his seminary career that he conceived of the idea of a religious society for work among American Protestants. He was ordained to the priesthood in London by Bishop Wiseman in 1849 and returned to New York in 1851. Somehow he could not remove from his head the idea which had come to him while in the seminary. Several others shared his view, and with their backing he approached the superior of the congregation with regard to forming an American house of Redemp-

torists. This did not meet with the approval of his superior, and so Fr. Hecker made plans to go to Rome and lay his problem before the superior-general. This he did only to find upon arriving in Rome that he had jeopardized the Canon Law of the congregation and was, therefore, unjustly expelled. Some months later Fr. Hecker received an audience with Cardinal Barnabo who listened with patience to the idea which the former presented. He secured for him an audience with the pope, then Pius IX, who approved of the plan and dispensed Fr. Hecker from his vows in the Redemptorist Congregation. On July 7, 1858 the Missionary Society of St. Paul the Apostle was formed and the "Programme of Rule" approved. The Paulist Society had come into being.

The primary purpose of the Paulists is that of all religious societies, congregations and orders, namely, the pursuit of spiritual perfection. Its specific reason for existence is the presentation of Catholic truth to the people of America. The ideal of the society is expressed in the words of Fr. Hecker:

The backbone of a religious community is the desire for personal perfection actuating its

members. The desire for personal perfection is the foundation stone of a religious community; when this fails, it crumbles to pieces; when this ceases to be the dominant desire, the community is tottering. The main purpose of each Paulist must be the attainment of personal perfection by the practice of those virtues without which it cannot be secured, mortification and self-denial, and detachment, and the like. Our vocation is apostolic-conversion of souls to the faith, of sinners to repentance, giving missions, defense of the Christian religion by conferences, lectures, sermons, the pen, the press, and the like works; and in the interior to propagate among men a higher and more spiritual life. To supply the special element the age and each country demands, this is the peculiar work of religious communities; this is their field. (1)

Paulists take no vows in the religious state. However, they do make a profession. They promise that they will remain in the society for three years to work in payment for having been put through the seminary. After three years are completed, no vows, no rules, no laws bind them; they are free to leave if they wish. Paulists do not have a monastic garb, but must wear the regular habit of the parish priest. They do not have to recite in choir the daily offices. They do a great work in America for the preaching of the Catholic faith. They train choristers to sing in the churches and conduct preaching missions to gather in converts.

1. Gillis, Op. Cit., pp. 47-48

Roman Catholicism has branched out considerably in the category of her monastic institutions. Perhaps the strength of the Church is still responsible for the many monastic and semi-monastic communities which have risen up to defend the faith. The bulwark of the Church is still the men and women who have left the world to devote themselves to a better good.

CHAPTER VIII

CONTEMPORARY ANGLICAN MONASTICISM AS REFLECTED BY THE RELIGIOUS ORDERS IN THE AMERICAN CHURCH

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In July of 1833 John Keble, of ever blessed memory, preached the Assize Sermon on Oxford on the subject "National Apostasy" and the English Catholic revival of the nineteenth century, commonly called the Oxford Movement, was under way. Catholicism had slept for centuries the sleep of the dead, but now the spiritual force of the Oxford Movement gradually awakened the Church to her true status. Once more the Catholic Religion took hold of the Church of England and raised her and freed her from the pressing bonds of Protestantism. The Oxford Movement proved that there was very definitely a difference between Church and State, and that the latter could not rule over the former. A temporal power cannot very well rule a spiritual power. Gradually, therefore, the stain glass windows which the Puritans rejected were re-installed in the cathedrals; altars with candles and priests with vestments reappeared, and the preaching of the Catholic faith by way of the Thirty-Nine Articles which were proved to have been

capable of a Catholic interpretation.

The Oxford Movement did not confine itself to the secular clergy, but successfully influenced the re-planting of the seeds of monasticism in the English Church. Ever since the dissolution of the monasteries under Henry VIII, with the possible exception of the experiment of Nicholas Ferrer at "Little Gidding", monasticism had practically been obliterated from English Church life. Then in the middle of the nineteenth century when men were awakening to the true values of religion, the Oxford Movement introduced monastic institutions back into the corpus of the Church, and they have been an integral part of the Anglican Communion ever since.

Prior to the year 1866 there were several sisterhoods in England following a rule of life. It was in this year, however, that the first monastic institutions for men were organized and established at Cowley St. John Oxford by one English and two American priests. From this nucleus came what is now the Society of St. John the Evangelist which will in turn give impetus for the founding of the Order of the Holy Cross and all the other American religious orders and communities.

In order to describe adequately the monastic

community of the Society of St. John the Evangelist, it is necessary to give the English antecedents of the community, since autonomy for the American province was not fully realized until 1914. In reading the several sources for this chapter one is surprised with the comparative recency of the orders for men in America. This chapter will be limited to the discussion of three out of the five communities for men, but for the sake of convenience and information all of the communities are here listed: The Society of St. John the Evangelist, Order of the Holy Cross, St. Barnabas' Brotherhood, Order of St. Francis, and the most recent of all the order of St. Benedict. Discussion will be limited to the first three.

The first attempt at the revival of the religious life for men came as early as 1849 when Bishop Levi Silliman Ives of North Carolina, who later became a convert to Roman Catholicism, founded a religious community at Valle Crucis, North Carolina. This was short lived, however, and disbanded the same year it was organized. Nothing further was organized in the way of a community for men until 1866 when in England there was formed a

1. Manross, A History of the American Episcopal Church (New York: Morehouse Gorham Co., 1935), p. 284

society which was to have an ultimate effect upon America.

The communities for men in the American Church are monastic orders in the proper sense of the word. They follow more closely the Roman Catholic conception of the word "order" in that they differ very definitely from the other monastic societies in the Roman Church. Every monastic order in the American Episcopal Church has a superior-general and a rule. All live a community life and take the threefold vow of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Every order or community has its habit very simple perhaps, but nevertheless, a habit. All have some definite occupation and all observe the "Opus Dei" in some form or other. In structure they are all in line with one another and differ only in work and habit and minor rules. Strictly speaking, you will find no pious societies, clerks regular, or congregations in the American Church, for the only word used to describe our religious societies is the word "order". It is true that the Society of St. John the Evangelist bears the nomenclature of a pious society; it is perhaps the nearest thing to an organization of clerks regular than anything else. You will recall that clerks regular is a congregation which combines the secular priesthood with the communal life of the monastery.

In response to the question what is the religious life, the Society of St. John the Evangelist in a little pamphlet marked "Vocation", has answered for all the communities. The author says that the religious life means living "under bond" or "under rule." He says:

The religious life is a life which the whole man, every part of his nature, every act of his life, is brought under rule that he may perfectly know and obey the Will of God; a life in which everything is given up which might come between him and God, and might in any way prevent him from fulfilling the Will of God perfectly. This bond is not merely for a time, but for one's whole life. The dedication of the whole being to this life is gathered under three heads, which becomes three vows taken by all who enter it--the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. (1)

So the threefold monastic vow is part of all the religious communities of Our American Church. Of what then do the three vows consist?

In the first place poverty means the giving up and putting away from oneself everything belonging to the world. It is the answer to the call of the Master to "sell all". In the religious life nothing belongs individually to any man or woman, but all is the property of the whole. Their food is given by rule, and their clothes are given by rule; they work by a rule, and they pray by a rule.

1. Pamphlet entitled "Vocation" (London: D. Dingle: Dingle Press., 1930), p. 9.

Chastity is the vow that binds the soul to give up all its affections to God who has called it. Earthly love will remain, that is only natural, but it must never be placed before Divine Love. "He that loveth father and mother more than Me is not worthy of Me." ¹

Obedience is the vow which brings the Will of God into every moment of life. Those called to the religious life do not live alone, but in societies of either men or women. In each there is a superior who has authority over all and must be obeyed. This is the hardest vow of all, for it means substitution for one's own will that of one's superior.

This then is the threefold vow on which monasticism of the ages has been based. Vocation to the religious life means all this, and it means it for a life time. The world is to be forgotten, but God is never to be forgotten for a moment.

In 1865-66 Richard Meux Benson, Charles Chapman Grafton, and Simon Wilberforce O'Neill began to live together in a house in the district of Cowley St. John, Oxford with the deliberate intention of testing the reality of their call of God to the religious life. They lived together for a year under the guidance of

Father Benson and in 1866 on the Feast of St. John the Evangelist took the following vow in one another's presence.

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, Amen. I (name) promise and vow to Almighty God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, before the whole company of Heaven, and before you my fathers, that I will live in celibacy, poverty and obedience, as one of the Mission Priests of St. John the Evangelist unto my life's end. So help me God. (1)

With this profession on the part of one Englishman and two Americans, the Society of St. John the Evangelist came into being. Father Benson is still revered as the Father Founder, for it is through his idea that the order for men was established.

What is the work of the Society of St. John the Evangelist? There are Americans who still have the idea that a monk is someone who surrenders all his capital to the monastery and then retires therein to live in peace and comfort until his death. This is a misconception of the monastic life altogether. The best answer to the question is found in Father Benson's own fundamental principle of the Society as he wrote it in the early days of the neophyte organization. He says:

The Society shall occupy itself in works missionary and educational, both at home and abroad, for the advancement of the Kingdom of Christ, as God in his good providence may seem to call; the Society is formed for the cultivation of a life dedicated to God according to the principles of poverty, chastity, and obedience, and only by

cultivation of that life, can its works be accomplished. (1)

Father Benson's idea of a monastic life was not that of the Fathers of the Desert, but a life in community with one another. The origin of the Society was for him the call of God. He believed that Cowley was founded by God and not by himself. He says:

God has not called us from the Church, but in the Church to a special mode of life.We must recognize, then, that the existence of the Society is a manifestation of the voice of God in His Church. We are not gathered here because God was not with us before the Society was formed, but rather because He was.We need constantly to meditate upon the divine vocation as the origin of the Society, and as its guide for the future. And as the divine vocation is the origin of the Society, so also is it the security for our permanent growth. God does not speak merely for the moment. When he calls into being a thing, he will preserve it. He calls for the purpose of continuance, provided that the sins of those who found, or of those who carry out the life, do not cause God to withdraw His call. (2)

In 1870 a branch house of the Society was founded in Boston, Massachusetts. This was the first monastic community to come to the Episcopal Church in America. Some of the fathers from Cowley St. John took over the Church of the Advent in Bowdoin Street, and later went to St. Clement's Church in Philadelphia. In 1882 the Church of the Advent moved into its new location leaving the old church in charge of the Cowley fathers who renamed it St. John the Evangelist. Until the year

1. Dale, op. cit., p. 11

2. Journal of the Society of the Holy Sepulchre (London: 1882), p. 11-32

1914 the community in America was directly under the supervision of the superior and chapter in England, but the latter part of the year, autonomy was granted, and the society set up work as a separate house. However, the same Rule was kept as in England.

In 1884 the Constitution of the society and its Rule of Life was formally recognized and approved by the Bishop of Oxford. This first Rule of Life was drawn up by Father Benson while at Cowley St. John, but it was gradually fashioned and revised until 1884 when it was published in its final form. Revisions and additions have been made in accordance with the statutes affixed for that purpose.

The Rule of Life of the Society of St. John the Evangelist is built entirely upon the ancient monastic threefold vow which every father must take at his profession. For the sake of convenience again, we shall follow the outline of the Rule as set down by Basil and Benedict. The Rule of "Cowley" may be divided into four parts:

- I. Joining the monastery.
- II. Life in the monastery.
- III. Order and discipline.
- IV. Various points.

I. See pages 21-22 of this treatise for the full outline.

Strictly speaking the Rule of Life follows that of Benedict and Augustine and is rather severe. A potential monk must renounce all of his possessions. As the Rule states:

No one who enters the community shall retain any property for his personal use. The wealth of this world is a burden in its acquisition, its retention, and its expenditure. Joyful is the soul which feels itself to be free from the embarrassments which worldly wealth brings. Silver and gold have I none. If we have parted with it for Christ, we may be sure that we have that which is much better, the riches of divine grace, ever abounding so as to make all our actions mighty through God by His blessing upon the outward weakness of our position in the world.(1)

Moreover, members of the community must put away the desire for wealth. The religious life must be a life of entire detachment from the world. On the profession of a brother or a father the income may be given over to the monastery. This part of the Rule is contrary to the ancient Rules of Pachomius and Basil who prohibited the monastery from accepting any property or money at all. Benedict modified his Rule by saying that money could be given to the monastery upon entrance therein, and it is believed that the Rule of "Covley" permits the same procedure. It says:

If anyone be rich and contribute largely to the funds of the community, he must not think that

on that account he is to receive any favors above those who contribute less. He must rather fear lest his spiritual defects be more injurious to the community than his pecuniary assistance is helpful. (1)

If money contributions to the community are not given in the spirit of real poverty, then they cannot bring any blessing to the community. This is Benedict's Rule exactly. Those who are rich must not flaunt their talents in front of the poor brethren. Benedict provides for punishment of those who do so. Pachomius and Basil did the same, and it is the same today in all monastic communities.

In the early days of monasticism it was the custom, if one felt the call to the monastic life, to stand outside the door of the monastery and call loudly for ten days to be admitted.² Benedict modified this procedure somewhat by reducing the time to five days. All this has been done away with completely now, but there are still rules for testing a postulant for admission. According to the "Cowley" Rule the postulant or potential monk must be at least twenty-one years of age and must present a certificate of Baptism, a medical report of his health, and one or more recommendations from his parish priest or confessor. Potential monks

1. Benson, Op. Cit., p. 118
 2. See the Life of St. Pachomius

must be free from engagements of debt and marriage.

If the postulant's credentials are proven satisfactory he is admitted as a postulant. This period lasts three months, but it may be extended to six and sometimes nine months. During this time he is watched closely for developments. He wears a choir cassock in the monastery and resumes street apparel when he goes out. After the postulancy, he, with the approval of the superior, enters the novitiate which lasts for three years. In three years he is eligible for election by the chapter to the community and must take life vows if he has reached the age of thirty. If he has not reached this age, annual vows will suffice until he comes of age.¹ On receiving life vows, he makes the profession which Father Benson and the first founders of the community made in 1866. The community is open to priests and laymen, and laymen are generally urged to study for the priesthood.

In the rule of the Society of St. John the Evangelist Father Benson has enjoined the keeping of the ancient monastic hours of prayer. He says: "In addition to the offices which are of obligation upon all clergymen of the Church of England, the fathers shall recite the Opus Dei."²

1. Rule, Op. Cit., p. 23

2. Clergy of the Church of England are bound to recite Morning and Evening Prayer daily.

A day in the Society of St. John the Evangelist begins at six A.M. Matins, Lauds, and Prime and Preparation for Mass are recited at half past six. The priests then offer the Holy Sacrifice.¹ This is facilitated by the presence of several altars in the monastery chapel which are used daily. Breakfast is at eight fifteen followed by Terce. Silence reigns from nine to ten, for this is the time set aside for meditation and mental prayer. At ten the work for the day begins. Silence reigns until noon except on Sunday and Great Festivals of the Church. At twelve-thirty Sext, Examen, None, and Intercessions are recited followed by lunch. The novices have their recreation immediately following the mid-day repast and are then assigned to various tasks. Vespers is recited at six followed by supper. Formal recreation enjoyed by the whole community follows in the common room. A half-past seven silence again begins and Compline closes the day at nine-thirty when the great silence begins and all retire. In the composition of the monastery day, the Rule of St. Benedict was followed.

Food in the community is taken in three meals a day.

1. A. B. Benedictine Monks, 1915, p. 13.

except on the days of fasting prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer. The rule regarding food follows closely that set forth by St. Benedict of at least two cooked dishes for dinner and supper. Breakfast is a typical American monastic innovation which is not found in any of the ancient Rules. Father Benson counselled frequent fasting for the good of the soul. Abstinence from flesh meat is not prohibited except on Fridays and other days marked as fasts on the monastic calendar.

In 1884 the Bishop of Oxford clothed the community in its habit which consisted of a black cassock and girdle wound three times around the body and tied in three knots symbolizing the threefold vow of poverty, chastity, and obedience.

All in the monastery must work. Should we quote the time worn admonition of St. Paul again we would be justified in doing so. ¹ Everyone in "Cowley" is assigned his proper task in the monastery and out of it too.

Prior to autonomy of the American Congregation effected in 1914 there was one superior for the whole Society residing in England. Since each house is now autonomous, there is a superior and chapter for each congregation. Obedience to Father Benson was the most important of all the vows. Father Benson felt that the

1. II. Messianicus 3:1.

roots of a monastic life lay in the "powerful concrete of Holy Obedience." The order and discipline today in the communities is vested in the superior alone as in the time of Benedict. The superior is the head of the house and the spiritual father of all who dwell therein. He must admonish frequently confession and communion for each monk. He must rule the monastery, and the monks must obey him. Father Benson says:

We must be content on all occasions to act or to abstain from acting, to follow or to tarry, as may be the will of Him to whom we are given, made known to us by those whom He has set over us. Humble obedience is secure against any possible humiliation, for the great glory of the obedient is to recognize no existence except what is derived from the superior authority. Our object is that we may be purged from self-will. If obedience is to be hearty, it must be the instinctive expression to live co-operating with the will of the superior. Obedience must therefore open the heart to live in unity of purpose with the superior authority. (1)

The superior has several assistants to help him in his work. These are: a novice master, secretary, assistant superior, and a guestmaster.

Essentially this is the Rule of the Society of St. John the Evangelist. The Society is mainly a teaching one. It is devoted to the teaching of the

Catholic faith through the preaching of missions, conducting of schools of prayer, and administration of parishes. The Society is also engaged in missionary work in Japan where there is a Japanese Congregation fully independent and working in conjunction with the Nippon Seko Kai or The Holy Catholic Church of Japan. At the present there are four congregations of the Society: The English Congregation which includes the work in India and South Africa, The American Congregation, The Canadian Congregation, and the Japanese Congregation. Like the Benedictines today, each house is autonomous, but all are united in spirit and tradition in one great Society of Mission Priests under the patronage of St. John the Evangelist.

THE ORDER OF THE HOLY CROSS

In the same year the Constitution and the Rule of the Society of St. John the Evangelist was formally approved by the Bishop of Oxford, Father James O.S. Huntington took final vows in an order, strictly American, of which he was the founder. This was the beginning of the Order of the Holy Cross.

1. Autonomous since the outbreak of World War II.

We have seen in the study of Roman Catholic monasticism how the Congregation of St. Paul the Apostle was organized by American priests for the purpose of "making America Catholic." Similarly, the Order of the Holy Cross was to be an American Order for the restoration of the Catholic faith in the American Episcopal Church. It was the first order to have its beginning in the Church in America, and to this day it remains an authentic outcome of American life.

The Order of the Holy Cross came into being when the clergy and laity of America were accusing the so-called "high church" party of reviving ancient antagonisms. When the first monastic community appeared in 1870 with the coming of the "Cowley" Fathers the Church was very much alarmed and feared a return to the Middle Ages. This very thought is expressed in the book on Father Huntington's life. "The sisters all knew none the less, that to the mind of the bishop, the revival of the monastic system meant return to outworn Mediaeval practices and mystical beliefs." ¹ Despite a storm of ridicule and dissatisfaction on every side, James C.C. Huntington succeeded in founding the Order of the Holy Cross the strongest of the American Episcopal religious

¹ I. Scudder, *Vida, Father Huntington* (New York: E.P. Dutton and Co., 1940), p. 78.

communities today.

Father Huntington was born in New England in 1854 the son of a Unitarian minister who in time became the Episcopal Bishop of Central New York. The future founder of the Order of the Holy Cross had come from a fairly wealthy family which enjoyed all the comforts of its day. He was given an excellent education with a university course at Harvard and a seminary course at St. Andrew's Divinity School then in Syracuse, New York. He was ordained deacon and priest in the year 1880. All through his university course he had had a keen interest in religion. While a priest in Calvary Church, Syracuse, he was noted for his "high church" tendencies, but it was not until he went to New York to a poor mission conducted by the Sisters of St. John the Baptist that he realized he had a vocation as a Religious, and a mission to re-establish that vocation in the Episcopal Church. He have been told, heretofore, that to become a Religious one must experience a call to the life. Father Huntington's call came while attending a retreat at St. Clement's Church Philadelphia. He found two others who had been effected by a similar call, and together they laid plans for an American order.

The Society of St. John the Evangelist was English in aspect, and Father Huntington, being an American, wanted an order for America composed of Americans. He had the courage to put his own convictions in writing. He wrote to his father the Bishop of Central New York: "In the rightness and advantage of two things I strongly believe: Religious Orders for men and women and confession." ¹ The bishop replied by letter that he heartily believed in the former, but could not countenance the latter.

In 1881 Father Huntington and his two companions rented an old house in the lower East side of New York near the Mission of the Holy Cross. There they lived in poverty, chastity, and obedience. His father the bishop writing to a friend described the new order founded by his son:

They live in poverty, chastity, and obedience, with bare floors, no tablecloths, scanty furniture, plain food, and seem content. I went and celebrated for them one morning, slept there on a cot, and he consecrated the different rooms with prayers from the Priest's Prayer Book. Pray for them. (2)

A cousin of Father Huntington's also had visited him in

1. Boulder, Col. Cit., p. 75.
2. Ibid., p. 73

New York also gives an account of the early days of "Holy Cross." He says:

They rise at half-past five, work and have services till half-past eight, when they take breakfast. They have a great many services, nine a day I think. He seems thoroughly happy in his work, and looks and says he is very well. Silence is always kept in the entries, halls, stairways and chapel. On going down in the morning no one speaks till Father says something: then at breakfast all stand while one of the fathers reads a chapter from the Bible, then bow while grace is being said. On some days they do not speak all day except when necessary. (1)

Father Huntington shared the belief of the Roman Catholic clergy that wherever there was not religious orders, the Church degenerated. It is with this thought in mind that he founded the Order of the Holy Cross and passed two years as a novice before taking final vows in 1884. During his novitiate the two companions who had started with him left, and he was the first novitiate of the Order by himself. On November 25, 1884 he took final vows in the Order of the Holy Cross. He gave his profession to Bishop Potter of New York in the Mission of the Holy Cross where he worked for four years. The service of profession is described in an old Church periodical, and we will do well to set it down here, because it is the same service of profession today. The

present order has tried to remain as close to the original things introduced by Father Founder as is possible. The periodical says:

The office provides that the service of profession shall take place during a Celebration of the Holy Communion. After the Gospel has been sung, the novice to be professed shall be led forward to the superior and shall stand before the altar. He shall hand the bishop a copy of the Rule of Life of the Order of the Holy Cross written in his own hand. The bishop shall place this upon the altar with the cross and girdle, and turning to the novice shall demand: "Do you solemnly and forever surrender all that you possess, or of which you may hereafter become possessed, even to the least article of personal use or enjoyment, in accordance with the vow of religious poverty?" Will you shape your life in accordance with the Rule of Life of the Order of the Holy Cross? And will you give respectful obedience to all lawful commands of your superior and to the decisions of the chapter, submitting your own will to their Godly directions and administrations under the vow of religious obedience?" The bishop prays here, and after that the Veni Creator Spiritus is sung. The bishop taking the right hand of the novice says, "I admit you (Name) a member of the Order of the Holy Cross, in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen." (1)

The service continues to invest the monk with the cross which he wears around his neck, the girdle or cord which girds three times round the body and ties in three knots, and the Rule of Life by which he is to live and be governed in all his actions.

1. Scudder, Op. Cit., p. 92.

Father Huntington was alone in his own order until 1888 the date of the profession of Father Sturgis Allen.

Without any further delay we shall proceed to
¹
 the discussion of the Rule of Life.

- I. Joining the monastery.
 - (a) Withdrawal from the world.
 - (b) Renunciation of possessions.
 - (c) Admission to the community.
- II. Life in the monastery.
 - (a) Prayer
 - (b) Meals
 - (c) Clothing
 - (d) Work
- III. Order and discipline.
- IV. Various other points.

The Rule of Life suggests the glory of the Mediaeval Church, but the Order itself says that its foundation is Augustinian, for its members are free to undertake parochial cures, work in schools, and go out to preach the Gospel. Contrary to this system is that of the Benedictine which rigidly confines everyone to the monastery. The Rule of Life is treated under three main headings: Prayer, Mortification, and Good Works. These in turn are related to the three vows of poverty, obedience, and chastity. Father Huntington says that
²
 "the vow of obedience is the portal of the religious state."

1. See outline on pages 33-34
 2. Scudder, Op. Cit., p. 196.

To become a member of the Order of the Holy Cross, one must first feel the call of God. He then must lay aside his earthly ties and prepare to enter the Religious Life. The potential monk must give all of his wealth and good to relatives or to charities. The order itself does not accept any money from the novice. Father Huntington was quite strict on this rule, and in it he followed the previous ruling of St. Basil. The novice clothes himself in the garb of the order and divests himself of all worldly goods. In a sense he becomes poverty-stricken for the sake of Christ and His Church. The Rule of Life follows closely that of "Cowley". The potential monk is first a guest, then a postulant for four months, then a novice for three years. After this period of probation he may make his profession and take life vows.

Father Huntington followed an accredited monastic tradition in prescribing a fixed routine. Mass was said every morning of the year, and the Opus Dei gravely governed all. The seven divine offices of the Rule of St. Benedict were recited daily. In addition to this, every professed priest and lay brother had to spend one hour in meditation; each had to pay at least two visits to the Blessed Sacrament daily, and at least one half hour daily in spiritual reading.

Three times during the day there was to be an examination of the conscience, and the rule of silence was strictly observed. "Holy Cross uses the Monastic Diurnal, which is a direct translation of the breviary of Benedict containing the "Opus Dei". The schedule at "Holy Cross" follows closely that of "Cowley". The community rises at five-forty-five every morning; at six-twenty Lauds, Prime, and the Capitular Office¹ are recited in the chapel. The Holy Sacrifice is offered each morning. Breakfast is at eight followed by a half-hour of meditation in the chapel. At nine Terce and Intercessions are recited followed by the Chapter of Faults, the reading of a portion of the Rule, and assignments for the daily work. Sext, Examen and None are recited at noon and are followed by lunch at twelve-thirty. Free time and recreation until two when work begins again and lasts until five. Vespers is recited at five and followed by supper at six. De Profundis is recited during the tolling of the bell at seven. This is a prayer for the faithful departed in Christ. Compline is recited at nine and the great silence begins immediately.

1. We remember this from Benedict's Rule as being the general meeting of the community for giving out work and settling grievances.

In regard to meals, St. Benedict's Rule is followed as closely as possible, and the days of fast and abstinence as prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer are observed.

All professed in the order must be clothed in the habit which is very much on the order of the Benedictine habits. It is more elaborate than that of "Cowley", and follows more ancient lines. It consists of a cowl, a long garment shaped like a cassock, and a scapular which is a long apron-like garment fitting over the head and extending downward in back and front. This is the survival of the Benedictine piece called the apron which was worn as a protective covering while working in the fields. The girdle is wound three times around the body and is symbolical of the threefold vow. The plain cross given at the time of profession is worn around the neck. The habits are white when in the monastery proper, but the present Rule provides for the black habit when going on a journey. Ordinary clerical apparel is also permitted to be worn now while on the streets.

The most modern portion of the Rule, something totally lacking in the older Rules of Basil and Benedict, are the meticulous directions for cleanliness and care

of the person.

The Rule provides for tender treatment of sickness and death.

Active work of the Order of the Holy Cross comprises teaching in schools, preaching missions, taking care of parishes and other parochial work. The fathers also do extensive missionary work among the African natives in Liberia.

The spirit of Father Huntington, who died in 1935, lives on in the faithful fathers now in the order. It is the strongest of the American Orders. Monasticism is in the Church once more to stay. Surely God will not suffer the efforts of the Father Founder to be brought to naught.

ST. BARNABAS BROTHERHOOD

Mention should be made of the St. Barnabas Brotherhood because of its peculiar characteristic of being the only community for laymen exclusively in the American Church. St. Barnabas' Brotherhood was organized in America in 1907 by three laymen of the Church who were determined to found an institution for the care of sick men and boys. The community was formally opened in 1913 in the Diocese of Pittsburgh, where the Bishop of

Pittsburgh heard the vows of the first three brothers and gave them his approval and blessing. A Rule was developed in 1918 and approved by the bishop. The brotherhood does not have a complete rule, but what they do follow is taken from the ancient Rule of St. Benedict. Those who seek admission to the brotherhood must make a visit of six months followed by a postulancy of the same duration. The novitiate follows and lasts for two years when the postulant or novice becomes a junior professed brother for one year. He then becomes a senior professed brother remaining so for two years more when he is eligible for life vows. Roughly six years of preparation for life vows is expected. The whole Rule of the brotherhood is based on the threefold vow which all must take at the time of profession.

Life in St. Barnabas' Brotherhood is not quite as rigid as in the other communities of the Episcopal Church. The Holy Sacrifice is offered every morning in the monastery chapel by the resident chaplain, who is an ordained priest of course. Of the seven prayer offices, only five are recited daily and these in the choir. Prime, Sext, and Compline are recited from the Monastic Breviary, while Morning and Evening Prayer are recited using the Book of Common Prayer. Everyone must attend the two periods of meditation which are kept daily.

St. Barnabas' Brotherhood is devoted entirely to the care of sick men and boys. The brotherhood now owns three hospitals in America two of which are in the Diocese of Pittsburgh and one in the Diocese of Erie. With all their work in caring for the sick, the brothers never forget that they are primarily Religious vowed to a life of prayer and praise to Almighty God. They wear a habit very much like that of the Society of St. John the Evangelist. Their work is free and is supported entirely by contributions and endowments.

The Episcopal Church in the past has not seen fit to regret the work done by her monastic communities which are proving themselves assets rather than liabilities. She must continue to support them with vocations and funds in the future. In bringing this chapter to a close, it is significant that we quote the foreword in the pamphlet published by the St. Barnabas' Brotherhood:

One of the manifestations of the development of religion in our day has been the remarkable revival of Religious Communities for men and women in the Anglican Communion. Without the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the Church, no such rebirth of community life could have been possible. (1)

1. Pamphlet entitled "A Religious Order for Laymen" published by St. Barnabas Brotherhood in Gibsonia, Pennsylvania.

CHAPTER IX

CONTEMPORARY MONASTICISM IN THE EASTERN ORTHODOX
COMMUNION

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In 800 A.D. St. John of Damascus wrote the De Fide Orthodoxa which has been referred to by many scholars as the "Summa Theologica" of the Eastern Church. Practically nothing of any great importance has been written since by Eastern authors in the realm of theology. Today the theology of the East is largely that of St. John, and dogma is based on what is contained in his works. In a similar way we may refer to monasticism, for the Summa in monasticism was written in the fourth century with the Rule of St. Basil. Monasticism in the East knows no other Rule today save this, and all monasteries are referred to as being of the Basilian Order. The East was overrun by the Mohammedans and the Church, divided by internal strife, crumbled underneath the superior power of the invader. Only a remnant was saved which accounts for the fact that contemporary monasticism in the East is primitive and decadent. It has not known the advancement as has monasticism in the West. There has never been a St. Benedict in the East, nor has there been the glorious monastic reformers as in the West. The great orders of the Dominicans, Franciscans, Benedictines, and Augustinians,

have never penetrated the East. Eastern monasticism today is Basilian just as it was in the fourth century. The order has not changed since the days of the primitive Basil. Eastern monks today are ascetics, living the primitive, contemplative, semi-eremetical monasticism of Antony or the cenobitical monasticism of Pachomius and Basil. Monks of the East have never known a Renaissance, an awakening of learning, as the West has known. They are not learned and munificent in charity and education as the Benedictines; they do not interfere in worldly political intrigues; neither are they mendicants. Their observances lead them to a life of complete retirement from the world. Eight hours of the twenty-four are spent in prayer; they eat no meat, and on their feast days which comprise one-third of the year, they eat no animal substance, indeed, very little of anything passes their lips. They eat to live and that is all. They do not sit¹ in church but rest themselves by leaning on a crutch.

Monasteries now existing in the Levant of Egypt differ very little from those of Pachomius. They are inhabited by monks of the Coptic Church which is still very primitive. The monks still work at the primitive trades of basket-weaving and kitchen gardening.

¹ L. Curzon, Monasteries in the Levant (London: Humphrey Milford Co., 1913), p. 43.

It is truly a system of primitive decadence. They, like St. Antony of old, have gone into the desert to forget the world and its vanities.

We cannot compare all Eastern monasticism after this Coptic type found in Egypt. There are some monasteries in Greece which are a little more advanced, but even they are far from Western standards today. All are still permeated with mysticism and superstition. Miraculous ikons still speak to pilgrims, and holy springs and wells still wash one from the stain of sin. Holy fish and trees are still venerated as things having figured in the life of some miraculous saint now embedded in obscurity. The monks of the Greek Church have diminished in number and wealth of late; their monasteries are no longer schools of learning, for few can read the ancient Greek, and the majority are horribly ignorant not being able to write or even speak coherently.

Monasteries in the East are called Lauras. All profess the Rule of St. Basil, but this Rule takes different forms and different grades of austerity in each house. Every priest is a priest-monk. The novice wears a tunic with a belt, and after two years in which is equivalent to a Western novitiate he is invested with

what is called the small habit. After a further unidentified time of perseverance, he is invested with the great habit and becomes a full fledged monk.

Most monasteries in the East depend upon the local Metropolitan. In the Orthodox States of Greece and Russia the Holy Synod has a good deal to say about them. This body confirms the election of the abbots, controls the property and even has the right to confiscate it. Certain great monasteries, however, are exempt from local jurisdiction and from the Holy Synod as well. They are subject to the Patriarch of Constantinople alone.

The monasteries of Greece and Russia have been in the past subject to Imperial favor, as having been under the protection of former emperors, but this also means that they have been subject to intrigue and fraud. In the Eastern Church today every Metropolitan and member of the hierarchy must be a monk, while the secular clergy are permitted to marry.

The most complete example of Eastern monasticism today is found in the monasteries atop Mount Athos in Greece. Athos is called the "Holy Mountain" for upon it are hundreds of monasteries composed of groups of monks from the several autonomous Eastern Churches. Each monastery is autonomous in itself and enjoys freedom

from Episcopal control. All are under the Patriarch of Constantinople. There is a general assembly of monks members of which are sent from each monastery. The assembly has no jurisdiction inside any of the monasteries, but it is merely a group which acts in the interest of the whole community in its relation with the government.

There are two monastic systems on Athos. The cenobia predominates but is not the only one. There is another kind which resembles the semi-eremetical monasticism of Antony of Egypt. This second type is called Idiorrhythmic and is very primitive.

The cenobitical type is governed by an abbot having life tenure, aided by two or three trustees who are elected, according to the constitution of the monastery, either by the whole brotherhood or by the elders which are eight to ten older monks chosen by the abbot. The cenobitical monasteries are the more prevalent and have a much greater advantage. The monks are required to say all the divine offices daily and celebrate the Holy Liturgy. Money, food, and clothes are common property, and are managed by the abbot and his subordinates.¹ The employment of the monks outside church services depends upon their own status and capabilities.

1. See rule of St. Basil.

Craftsmen may work at their own trade, but they must work for the benefit of the brotherhood and not ask for pay.¹

The novitiate lasts for two to three years, and the novice must grow a beard and be at least twenty years old when entering. During the novitiate no regular instruction, not even theological, is given. At the end of the three years, the novice is tonsured. Monks who have been invested with the great habit are distinguished by a veil worn over the cap at services. They are expected to lead a life of greater austerity, since they must set the example for all. By taking priests orders a monk makes himself eligible for an eventual bishopric or perhaps an eventual parish. The punishment for breaking vows or escaping from the monastery is a loss of voice.²

The Idiorhythmic type is generally more self-to-do than the Cenobia and much more austere. The government of the monastery is somewhat different. Government is not by an abbot, but by a committee of trustees frequently changed. Property may be held by the monastery and paid appointments conferred by the monastery. Meals

¹ H. Gibbon, *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1789), 1. 113.
² R. P. Dutton and Co., 1904, p. 113.
³ Ibid., p. 117.

are taken in the cells, and the degree of austerity is left within reasonable limits to the individual. It is claimed that this type represents a much older form than that of the cenobia. It is less economical, however, and easily decays. An abbot is actually elected, but he enjoys little or no power and must promise not to interfere with the committee of trustees of the monastery. The government likewise is oligarchic, for the community is divided into two classes. The committee is chosen from the upper class, while the lower class must do all the manual labor.

There is also the type of monastery where the monks live by themselves and once a week go to church to hear the Holy Liturgy. This is indeed a primitive type only in the East. In spite of being primitive and decadent, however, the East is still very religious. The life of the monk is one continuous prayer which is all he cares about. On ordinary days service begins at midnight and continues until dawn when the gates of the house are opened and the Holy Liturgy is celebrated. Then comes a meal, a period of rest, meditation until four P.M. when the chanting begins and lasts until seven which is followed by a second meal.

On festivals services begin in the evening of the vigil and continue until noon of the following day. Attendance is strictly enforced by the abbot.

The Orthodox Church can never lay aside the praise of God through fasting. Flesh food is entirely forbidden at all seasons. Meat broth may be prescribed for a sick monk, but it has to be cooked outside of the monastery kitchen. There are three fast days a week, namely, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Lent brings further fasts when milk, cheese, and bread are all prohibited. Staple foods include beans and other vegetables, salads, oil, rice, fish and snails. Brown bread and wine may also be taken.

The monks of the present day do no manual labor themselves if they can find someone else to do it for them. Hence, they recruit laymen to labor in the fields and provide necessities for them while they spend their days in prayer and praise of God. The laymen are paid for their work and receive food and lodging also.

Monasticism in the East may be decadent and primitive, but it is kind. Travellers are treated with utmost consideration, and the hungry are fed. Monks will clothe the naked, and relieve the suffering who knock at their doors, but the world finds them wishing to be left alone in order to pursue their vocation of prayer. They shut

themselves away from the world not because they dislike their fellow men, but because they wish to prepare themselves in peace and quiet for the joys of Heaven and eternal blessedness which, in the end, is the desire of all souls.

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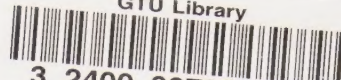
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